THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 8 July, 1926 Number 7

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP

The Great Mining Crisis
A. J. COOK (Secretary, M.F.G.B.)

The Miners' Struggle in Midsummer, 1926
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The Rank and File and the General Strike
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The Functions of a Communist University
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The World of Labour

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NOTES of the MONTH

Five Years — First Principles — Capitalist Decline — Apparent Recovery—Artificial Profits—The Real Contradiction—Class Antagonism—Leadership—Masses and Leaders—Right Wing Rôle—The Left Wing—Shadows Before—Failure of Centrism—"No Recriminations"—A Necessary Fight—The New Spirit.

WITH the present issue THE LABOUR MONTHLY enters on its sixth year of publication. The past five years since 1921 have seen a whole phase of the Labour Movement, starting from the collapse and lessons of "Black Friday," and rising up on an ascending scale to the mass strike of 1926, the Capitulation of May 12, and the present miners' struggle in whose victory or defeat the immediate future of the working class is bound up. With the events of 1926 a new period opens, as much transcending in its scope 1921-1926 as that period went beyond the years preceding. 1921-1926 was the slow and painful learning of the first lesson of "Black Friday"—the necessity of united mass struggle to meet the conditions of modern capitalism. But the second lesson of "Black Friday" was not yet learnt: that such mass struggle could not be conducted by the old reformist leadership save to defeat; that it necessarily led to new revolutionary tasks and problems of struggle with the whole forces of the State; and that it required a new revolutionary leadership to guide it. This is the lesson now driven home in unmistakable guise by the events of 1926; and the struggle of the period now opening is the struggle for the new revolutionary leadership.

FROM the outset, with the first number following closely on "Black Friday," THE LABOUR MONTHLY has fought for certain principles. First, that the present position of world capitalism as a whole after the war, and in particular of British Capitalism, is one of decline, making impossible the old gradual advance in conditions which the Western European working class was able to obtain during the latter half of the nineteenth century,

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and compelling repeated capitalist attacks on working-class conditions as the only alternative to the replacement of capitalism by the socialist organisation of production. Second, that this situation has destroyed the basis of the old reformist parliamentary and sectional trade union traditions in which the working-class movement had grown up, and has driven the old leadership which represented these traditions, no longer along a peaceful path of gradual growth and progress, but into open and repeated betrayals, coalition with capitalism and attacks on and splitting of the working-class ranks. And third, that the problem of the working-class movements in the Western European countries, grown up under the old conditions and confronted now with the new, was to discover the means to adapt themselves in time to the new conditions of struggle : to widen their aims from the old limited and sectional aims to the conscious aim of the conquest of power ; to widen their action from the old limited sectional action to the action of the whole class ; to prepare for attack on every front by the whole strength of the capitalist class, and to recognise the path of revolutionary advance as the only way forward : and, therefore, in order to realise this, to seek first to achieve immediate unity of action to meet the capitalist attack, and at the same time to survey the whole ground, to think in terms of the working-class struggle as a whole, both in Britain and internationally, to search out the new tasks and weapons, and above all to build up the new leadership which could meet the new conditions. For this reason every type and sign of new leadership that has been prepared to consider the working-class struggle as a whole and the way forward, has been sought for and welcomed in the pages of THE LABOUR MONTHLY, in conjunction with the most important pronouncements of the international movement, while at the same time a policy of criticism has been maintained as the necessary condition of assisting in the common task of building up the new leadership.

ALL these conditions, which are the elementary starting point of any Marxist outlook, have been intensified by the experience of the past five years. The decline of Capitalism in Britain, whether measured in the figures of trade or of production, has developed at a startling and accelerating pace

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between 1921 and 1926, with consequent intensified attacks upon all sections of the workers. During this period the visible adverse balance of trade has multiplied two and a-half times ; production in the basic industries has gone down ; the United States has at length outstripped Great Britain, not only in foreign markets and the export trade, but also in the issue of foreign investments. It has become universally admitted, what was not always admitted to begin with, that this decline is not simply part of a general world unsettlement, but specifically affects British Capitalism, which can no longer maintain its monopolist position in the face of the development of capitalism all over the world, and at the same time cannot adapt itself to the new position on the old capitalist lines. The reorganisation, unification and technical development, which has been partially possible in France and Germany on the basis of inflation, and in the United States on the basis of its modern growth and super-imperialist position, has not been possible in Britain, with its accumulated growth of property rights, watered capital, inflated debt, &c., which fetter effectively the development of production. The economic development which is essential to the life of the population of Britain, can now be effected only by the socialist organisation of production, which in its turn can be effected only by the working-class conquest of power, cutting away by direct blows (it cannot be done by any gradual process) the overgrowth of property rights, sectional interests and unproductive sinecure claims and incomes, and organising production on unified lines to meet actual needs. Until then the decline can only continue.

THIS decline in all the real basic factors of production is not affected, but is in reality only intensified by the fact that the bourgeoisie, during these years of national decline and poverty, has been able to extract increased profits for itself by its financial and imperial policy, has re-established on an economically unjustified basis the gold standard, thus doubling at a stroke its claims of exploitation from the workers, has extended profitable enterprise in the colonies, has maintained monopolist restriction and prices of certain commodities in the world market, and has been able to develop at a lightning rate of high profits

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certain artificial and secondary industries at home. On this basis the wealth and profits of the bourgeoisie have increased year by year from 1921 to 1926 ; the capital value of estates subject to estate duty has risen from £372 millions in 1920–1 to £461 millions in 1924–5 ; the *Economist's* figure of standard industrial profits has risen from 7 per cent. in 1922 to 10·9 per cent. in 1925 ; the Board of Trade's estimate of income from foreign investments has risen from £175 millions in 1922 to £250 millions in 1925. Thus the Chancellor of the Exchequer was able to declare in his Budget speech of 1926 that :—

> the nation is richer this afternoon than it was a year ago. The profits on which future calculations of income tax may be based show an increase, a substantial increase ;

but in the same speech he had also to declare :—

> The basic industries of the country, those which employ the largest number of the workpeople, nearly all continue obstinately depressed under their heavy burden.

This is the contradiction of British Capitalism to-day, in which even the increasing prosperity of the bourgeoisie is only an intensifying factor of the decline.

THE increasing prosperity of the bourgeoisie in the present period bears no relation to the previous prosperous periods of British Capitalism. The previous periods of prosperity were centred on the basic industries of Britain : coal, iron, steel, engineering, textiles and shipping, in conjunction with a monopolist hold of the world market and trade, and a colonial control of raw materials, and on this basis was built up the financial hegemony. In consequence the pre-war prosperity, although based on world-exploitation, was able to concede to the home proletariat in the basic industries an improving standard of life, which provided the basis of reformism, craft unionism, nationalism and liberal democratic politics. This is no longer the case to-day. The present prosperity of the bourgeoisie is drawn from sources which are not centred on the basic industries of Britain, and which therefore do not draw the majority of the population within their scope. A large source of profit may come directly from foreign and colonial enterprise, from colonial subsidiary companies, from the rubber monopoly, tin, oil, &c. Another large source of profit

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may come from home industries ; but even there the home industries yielding the highest and growing profits prove either to be luxury industries, or else special secondary industries directly dependent for their export upon the control of the colonies, *e.g.*, the motor industry (75 per cent. exports to the colonies), artificial silk (71 per cent. to the colonies), electrical goods (65 per cent. to the colonies), &c. But the basic industries of the country, in which the majority of the population are engaged, remain depressed by world competition, and neglected and without development under Capitalism, which has found avenues of more speedy profits : and in consequence, in order that these industries may be made equally profitable under Capitalism, the wages and standards of the workers in them have to be driven down.

HENCE the contradiction of the situation to-day. The pre-war prosperity of British Capitalism provided the means of buying off the leading sections of the workers with temporary gains and concessions. To-day, the exact opposite is the case. In face of the growing prosperity of the bourgeoisie, the workers have to be called on for growing "sacrifices" to save the declining industry. For Capitalism there is no escape from this position, save by the method of the subsidy, which Capitalism is not sufficiently united to be able to carry through on any large scale in industry. Therefore, the growing prosperity of the bourgoisie, which might seem to be a contradiction of the decline, is the exact opposite : it is not only a symptom of the unhealthy character of the whole position (stagnant industry and rising profits), but it is an intensification of the decline, because it throws into the open and accentuates the complete antagonism of class interests in modern Britain.

THIS antagonism of class interests has developed at a tremendous pace during the five years. From the collapse of the limited alliance of 1921 to the four-million class solidarity and the threats of civil war in 1926 is a gigantic step. In between has come the growth of the Labour vote from two millions to five millions, and the experience of the MacDonald Government. The whole strength of the working class has entered into the first

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stages of direct struggle with the bourgeoisie. The Liberal period of British history has ended. The right wing Labour leaders, in conjunction with the remnants of the Liberal party, will still endeavour to maintain the Liberal mask, and even at some future point may form a Government : but they can only do so now as open enemies of the advancing militant force of the working class. The MacDonald Government was already revealing the first signs of this break. The General Strike has brought it into the open. The General Strike has revealed beyond escape the two camps facing one another henceforth in Britain, and has laid bare the armoury of bourgeois power. Not only has the General Strike itself been the greatest lesson and impetus towards conscious class strength and action, but the whole policy, propaganda and action of the Government, the rôle of the reformist leaders, and the aftermath of the capitulation, the immediate attack upon all the workers and on the whole of trade unionism, the flinging aside of Commission pretences by both the Government and the mineowners, and the concentration of the full attack upon the miners, all this has been a lesson of the realities of the future struggle for millions of workers to draw from direct experience. The workers have learnt that, even to fight for their barest needs, they have to enter on a united mass struggle with the whole forces of the Government ; but they have had occasion to learn also that they cannot conduct this mass struggle under the existing reformist leadership.

FROM henceforward the question of leadership has been thrown to the front as the central question for the whole working-class movement. In previous years the insistence of the revolutionaries on the question of leadership has been met often with some hesitation and distrust as throwing excessive emphasis on differences which had better be left in the background, that the development of the movement should be left to take its course, that all forces should be concentrated on "the enemy," *i.e.* the bourgeoisie, without "wasting time" on inner differences, and so forth. These notions have been exploded once and for all by the experience of the General Strike. The experience of the General Strike has shown that the question of leadership is a life and death question for the workers, and that to neglect it or treat it lightly is

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fatal. The experience of the General Strike has shown that " the enemy " exists, not only outside in the opposite camp, but also within the camp, that the enemy within is in fact the most dangerous, and that to neglect to fight this enemy means to destroy the fruits of the most heroic and determined fight against the enemy outside. In the discussions that are taking place over the experiences of the General Strike, in the lessons that are being drawn, the future of the working class is at stake ; and this future depends above all on the learning of the lesson that all the solidarity in the world, all the heroism and sacrifice and determination alone are not enough, it is necessary also to achieve revolutionary leadership.

IN all the discussions that have taken place, one fact has been universally admitted as established once and for all by the General Strike. That fact is, that it is no longer a question of the readiness of the masses for the struggle, but of the readiness of the leadership. The old reformist myth that it is only the backwardness of the workers which is the obstacle to the progressive intentions of the leaders is smashed. Only a couple of weeks before the General Strike, Brailsford, in his answer to Trotsky, was expressing polite incredulity at Trotsky's statement that the workers in Britain were already in practice far in advance of the I.L.P. leaders, and holding it up as a glaring example of Russian " ignorance " of British conditions. After the General Strike the statement appears as the merest commonplace. On the Continent, Social Democracy, to save the faces of their colleagues, has spread the myth throughout their Press that the General Strike was defeated by " mass strike-breaking," that the heroic fighting intentions of MacDonald, Thomas and the rest were only defeated by the narrow-spirited backwardness of the workers failing to respond. But the reformists themselves have had to give the opposite picture in England. MacDonald himself has testified to the success of the strike and the negligible figure of breakaways. And the Secretary of the I.L.P. has given as his explanation of the breakdown of the strike :—

> The explanation is probably simple. The General Strike has been led by people who don't believe in it, and *they*—not the workers—cracked.

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Thus the opposition of the readiness of the workers and the backwardness of the leaders is here made by the I.L.P. itself. That the question is a question of leadership is common ground.

THERE is only one alternative to facing the question of leadership, and that is to abandon the struggle. This is what the Right Wing leaders are advocating in their endeavours to proclaim the General Strike itself at fault as a wrong weapon. This proclamation is particularly shameless. At the moment of the decision and the opening of the struggle these same leaders gave no hint of their view, but instead came forward as the champions of the General Strike and established themselves at the head of its direction. Having established themselves at the head of its direction, they proceeded to strangle it and take every measure to ensure its defeat. Having ensured its defeat, they come forward to proclaim the final failure of the General Strike weapon, and even that they knew its folly all along. This is the typical rôle of Social Democracy. In Germany, Ebert, in the Leipzig lawsuit to establish his honour against the Nationalist imputation that he had participated in a revolutionary strike committee during the war, swore on oath and brought witnesses to prove that he had only entered on that strike committee by instruction of the Social Democratic Executive in order to bring the strike to an end and prevent the incipient movement against the war. This is the lowest rôle, lower than any spy or informer. It is to don the uniform of the workers' camp in order to lead the workers to defeat, while maintaining contact all the time with the enemy staff. Compared with such, the Right Wing leader who honestly opposes the forward struggle of the workers, and stands aside when defeated, is decent. With the former there is no question of discussion. It is the duty of every sincere working-class fighter to drive such types out of the Movement, or the ugly fate of the first German Revolution will be repeated in England.

ON the other hand, it was conspicuously the case that the Left Wing which had developed as an opposition tendency in the Trade Unions during the past two years, around the personalities of certain leaders in the General Council, such as

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Hicks, Bromley, Purcell, Tillett and others, completely failed to provide any alternative leadership during the crisis, and in practice fell behind the Right Wing. This is an extremely significant fact, and it is all-important that the lesson from it should be learned. The Trade Union Left Wing was not able to provide any alternative leadership to the Right Wing, because the Trade Union Left Wing had not yet in practice reached any basic difference from the Right. The Trade Union Left Wing was the reflection of important growing tendencies and aspirations within the working class, of a growing opposition to the opportunism and betrayals of the existing leadership, and the demand for a policy of solidarity and class struggle. But these tendencies and aspirations were not translated into any positive programme and proposals, any organised action and policy, any recognition of the alternative to opportunism, or any clearly formulated tactics and methods of struggle. Therefore, the phrases of solidarity and class struggle inevitably became air without substance ; in practice the Left Wing leaders were impotent, and therefore became the prisoners of the Right Wing, who at any rate had a positive policy, although a policy of surrender and co-operation with the bourgeoisie.

IN the symposium of all the Left Wing leaders on the General Council, which was published in THE LABOUR MONTHLY during the first six months of 1924, and constituted the first general statement of their outlook and policy, their future rôle was already clearly revealed in the character of their statements, and was analysed at the time. While the mere fact of their readiness to come forward in a general discussion was important, it was clear that there was not yet readiness to go beyond the most general expressions of solidarity and class-consciousness, that there was not any actual alternative policy or proposals, or consideration of the current working-class struggle or issues likely to arise in the future, nor was there readiness to break with the Right Wing or with the old " business " trade union tradition. One particularly striking phrase, which cast a warning shadow for the future, occurred in the important article of George Hicks, in which he stated that, while the future socialist revolution should be prepared

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for by " educational " propaganda, the current trade union struggle must be conducted on lines of " commercial practicability." This ominous phrase, which was singled out for comment at the time, received practical realisation in the crisis of 1926, when Hicks no less than Thomas and Baldwin was pressing a reduction of wages on the miners. Thus the actual submergence in the crisis was not surprising. But the failure of any attempt so far after the crisis to consider seriously the lessons to be learnt and the mistakes made, and the endeavour lightly to carry off the whole episode as a great success, is extremely grave, and makes for a complete and final identification with the Right Wing.

FROM these experiences the working class, and particularly the main body of workers who took part in the Left Wing fight, will learn big lessons for the future. The experience of the General Strike has shown that the only positive alternative policy in the crisis to that of the Right Wing was the policy of the Communist Party ; there was no third alternative in between. This fact is of very great significance for the future. The Communist Party, which alone advocated preparations for the inevitable struggle when the Left Wing leaders were either doubting its inevitability or declaring preparation inadvisable, was also alone in clearly recognising the struggle for what it was, not as a " purely industrial" struggle to be called off the moment the Government declared it a menace to the Constitution, but as a class struggle of the working class with the whole strength of the bourgeoisie and the Government, and therefore to be waged with every weapon of strength of the working class, to defeat or victory as a stage in the struggle for power, but not to surrender on a basis of wage-compromise, loyalty to the Constitution, disruption of the working class ranks, and trust in the benevolent intentions of the bourgeoisie. The Communist Party gave a clear, unhesitating leadership for united struggle against the Government without surrender; and both before and during the crisis showed concretely the forms and methods of struggle, at the same time as throwing its weight into the fight at every point. The main body of the Left Wing workers, however, were not yet ready to follow the lead of the Communist Party, and therefore inevitably were at the mercy of the

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Right Wing. The collapse of the Left Wing leaders was, therefore, nothing other than the classic failure of Centrism. The very plea of self-defence of the Left Wing leaders, that they were fooled by the bourgeoisie over the Samuel Memorandum, is the clearest evidence of their complete lack of any clear outlook or policy, which left them thus at the mercy of the bourgeoisie. This experience will have a profound effect on the development of the Left Wing. The Left Wing workers will increasingly come to recognise that, only when the general aspirations and phrases of solidarity and the class struggle are translated into a positive programme, tactics and organisation, such as can, in fact, finally only be realised through a revolutionary mass-party, only then can a real alternative to the existing Right Wing opportunism be found.

THE Left Wing leaders are to-day declaring that there should be no recriminations, no dwelling on the past, or internal dissensions, but a united front against the enemy, a general readiness to forgive and forget, and preparation in a spirit of united harmony for next time. This, however, is completely to miss the real issue. There is not the slightest wish to spend time on recriminations or on personal questions. The united working-class front in the immediate struggle, the miners' struggle, is the first necessity (though that united front is realised to the extent that the workers are united in the struggle, that is to say, to the extent that the ban on coal is realised, not to the extent that controversy is silenced, while coal is being transported). But, alongside the current struggle, the lessons of what has taken place must be learned ; and they can only be learned by the fullest discussion, examination of every incident and every rôle, and hammering out of the points of difference, without consideration of personal feelings and susceptibilities. Discussion is essential on such burning questions arising from the strike as the rôle of leadership, the rôle of the State, the meaning of political struggle, the need of a centralised mass party, &c. To fail to do this is to neglect the interests of the working-class movement, to ban the way to all development, and to make certain the repetition of catastrophe. A working-class movement is strong in proportion as it is able to examine with absolute clearness its own experiences

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and learn from its mistakes. The plea against discussion is, therefore, reactionary and harmful. The plea in the name of unity is equally mistaken. Working-class unity can only be realised under a leadership which believes in and is prepared to fight for and maintain working-class unity. To plead for unity with leaders whose whole policy is to disrupt the working-class ranks at every critical point is to plead for working-class disunity. The interests of working-class unity and of the future struggle demand that the lessons of the past crisis shall be learned and carried into effect, even at the cost of an inner struggle in the working-class movement, in order that the working-class movement shall be strong for the future struggle.

THE past five years have shown beyond question the development of the situation in England, the inevitable and accelerating capitalist decline, the growing clash of class interests, the worsening of the workers' standards, and the tearing aside of the veils of Liberalism and democracy, and a driving to greater and greater crisis. They have shown the growing stirring and awakening of the workers, the drive to mass struggle, the readiness to stride past the obsolete outlook of the old leadership, and the enthusiastic response to the first signs of a new fighting mass leadership. From this situation the tasks of the future stand out clear. The work of the coming period is to carry through the revolutionary transformation of the working-class movement, and to advance without hesitation to the entirely new type of struggles in front. The miners' struggle to-day is already evidence of a new spirit, the spirit of life-and-death proletarian struggle, which is stronger than starvation, defeat, and death, and which can only end, soon or late, in the crushing out of capitalist rule and the victory of the working class. All the conditions of to-day make for the spreading of that spirit. It is a new spirit for the conditions of Britain. The leadership which can express that spirit, which can most clearly comprehend the realities of the present situation and the inescapable tasks of the struggle in front, is the future leadership of the working class in Britain.

R. P. D.

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THE GREAT MINING CRISIS

By A. J. COOK

THE Miners' Lock-Out, the General Strike, and the Government's Eight Hour Bill have created an unprecedented situation in Great Britain. Not for a century have the workers been stirred to such an extent. Capitalism has failed to smash trade unionism, the only barrier to their objective. Every industry, every worker at home and abroad, is affected by the struggle.

Just as the crisis is a world crisis, so the struggle is a world struggle.

Industrially the future of Britain is being determined. Politically, the fate of parties is being decided. Liberalism is dead. Toryism will be swept aside because of its brutal suppression of the workers' rights. New methods, industrial and political, will be adopted to meet the great Capitalist Offensive. To live, Capitalism must crush Trade Unionism. Wages must be reduced; hours must be lengthened—all to the tune of "markets and competition."

The conflict between the new and the old ideas will be intensified in every trade union branch, in every Labour Party. UNITY is the need of the moment.

The events leading up to the General Strike are well known to all active workers. For many years the miners have been the strongest organised section, having militant leaders such as Robert Smillie and Herbert Smith. During the period prior to and during 1921, the Great Lock-Out, Frank Hodges and others were responsible for a policy which led to defeat.

The left wing leaders had long ago pointed out the necessity for preparing for the Capitalist Offensive, but another section, with the parrot cries of "Produce More," "Increased Production," "Sanctity of Agreements," &c., doped the workers, while the economic realists worked for 100 per cent. trade union organisation and a Workers' Alliance, plus *All Power to the General Council.* In 1924, the Trades Union Congress declared in favour of a change, as did also the Trades Union Congress in 1925. The

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rank and file, pressed and harassed in the pits, on the railways, workshops, &c., have had a real awakening : they demand action to protect their condition.

The First of May was a demonstration of the rank and file pressure which caused all the executives to be so unanimous. Every active worker could see in the miners' struggle his struggle.

The lack of preparation is entirely due to the ignorance of the position in the minds of many leaders who believed, and still believe, you can temporise with Capitalism.

The terrible slander and abuse to which I have been subject is evidence of the ferocity of the Master Class in their fear of losing power and control. The whole world is stirred by the miners' struggle, by the refusal of the men or their leaders to compromise on either hours or wages. The rallying of all Capitalism's forces, the Government's full support of the mineowners, their attempt with state aid and power to crush the miners, is proof positive of the nature of the struggle. The attempt to divide the prominent leaders failed. It is true Frank Hodges again played the masters' game by suggesting longer hours, which would not only be detrimental to the British miners, but is in direct opposition to the interests of the international miners. For they would suffer just as badly as we should, if the Government and the owners succeed.

A calm review of events of the past three years will convince any thoughtful student of industrial affairs that our policy has been fully vindicated. The rank and file *will* fight : the rank and file *will* unite, given a proper lead. We are, indeed, at the cross roads, and we must not take the wrong turning. The whole of our forces, the whole of our organisation, must be harnessed in this great epic struggle. For the whole future of trade unionism will depend on the success of the miners' struggle.

The need for scientific industrial re-organisation is now apparent to everyone. Let not personalities stand in the way. For drastic changes are necessary. The Trades Union Congress must be reconstructed as a real fighting machine. The Government has challenged the whole Labour Movement; Parliamentary and industrial passive resistance is useless. Men and women in industry are not to be palmed off with fine speeches of brotherhood, &c.

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They are realists ; they have been made realists. And they will only place their faith and trust in men and movements that *act.*

The year 1926 has brought to the front new issues that are almost a New Age. Are we preparing ourselves to meet it ? Internationally the miners and other workers are reuniting. We are linking up for the great offensive. The Russian Workers in their help to the miners gave given a lead to the world. The Capitalist Press with their murder stories all fall on deaf ears, because now the workers know their true friends. *A friend in need is a friend indeed.*

The struggle for trade unionism will be intensified until it forces action from the Trade Unions and Labour Party. The employers, backed by a reactionary Government, mean business. Therefore, let us realise the facts and prepare to meet them. The miners are leading the way in this historic battle for Freedom and Emancipation in which all workers at home and abroad must participate.

Prepare your Trades Councils. Attend your Trade Union meetings, study the problems so that we shall not fail to lead the workers out of bondage.

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THE MINERS' STRUGGLE IN MID-SUMMER, 1926

By R. PAGE ARNOT

THE General Strike lasted Nine Days. The Miners' Lock-out has already lasted Nine Weeks. All expectations have been dashed. The sweet apple of victory in the mouth of the bourgeoisie has turned to gall and wormwood. For a time they saw visions like the Book of Revelations ; but now their dreams of a new heaven (capitalist) and of a new earth (capitalist) " and there was no more Sea " (labour) have all faded slowly away. Meantime while the British working class is recovering with well-nigh unbelievable speed its solidarity, so rudely shattered in the second week of May, the workers of the Soviet Union by their gifts now amounting to £400,000 have, by this act alone, made out of the year 1926 an epoch of solidarity on a scale never known or imagined before.

What of the Miners themselves ?

Of them it is as it was in the " Song of the Fight at Maldon " well-nigh a thousand years ago :—

Mind shall be harder,
Heart the keener,
Mood shall be greater
As our might lessens.

In this heroic struggle, on which the eye of every conscious worker throughout the whole world is fixed, the fate of the entire working class is at stake. And not alone the workers. The bourgeoisie too know this struggle to be big with fate for their Empire ; and in the manner of its ending there may end much else as well.

Clearly there is nothing in any country more worthy of study than this present struggle. Let us review the forces and the order of events.

The Parties

(1) *The Miners' Federation of Great Britain*, the biggest single

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section of the Trades Union Congress, in which it has a financial membership of 800,000, is the largest trade union federation in the world ; responsible for the million and more mineworkers who were locked out on the First of May.

The Miners' Federation of Great Britain acts through its four officials (one permanently in London), who are responsible to the Executive Committee, which in its turn takes its policy from the Federation Conference of miners' delegates, each of whom, as a rule, is instructed by his district. There are some fifteen constituent districts (*e.g.*, Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation), within each of which, in most cases, a decision as to policy is taken and instructions given to delegates as a result of lodge meetings before the Federation Conference. Finally, there is the referendum or ballot vote of the whole Federation. Thus, in this extremely democratic framework, provision is made for a maximum of control by the miners themselves, if they choose to take it. Herbert Smith and A. J. Cook, as they themselves would say, are the mouthpiece of a million miners.

When one right-wing leader, Frank Varley, put forward a policy involving acceptance of cuts in wages, his action and his policy were so strongly and so universally reprobated that even the capitalist press, which had welcomed his declaration, were forced to point out that he had at that moment no body of mining opinion behind him.

Similarly, Mr. Frank Hodges, who proposed the acceptance of a seven-and-a-half hour day and then became silent, will almost certainly be arraigned before the International Miners' Executive Committee for his breach of elementary trade union discipline. The miners allow for this sort of thing in the case of the politicians —within their own ranks it is regarded as a break-away to be sternly repressed.

On the other hand, the weakness of the Miners' Federation is that it is not a centralised union. The strike money is distributed according to financial membership and not according to where it is most needed. Being thus, in some ways, like an alliance of county associations, it has the weakness of all alliances ; and if in an alliance one constituent member fails . . .

(2) *The Mining Association of Great Britain* represents the

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numerous colliery owners excepting some of the largest trustified concerns. It is truly representative of the individualistic nineteenth century coalowner who is still the symbol of private property in this industry. It does not represent the industry as a whole. It is the single owner multiplied a thousand times. Capitalistic anarchy of production and its mid-Victorian ideology speak through the mouth of the Mining Association. The coalowners' policy is always the policy of the single pit. It has no vision of British coal industry as one of half a dozen factors in the world market.

(3) *The Government* is composed of Baldwin with the harmonium and the legal Fascism of Churchill and Birkenhead. Flushed with its victory over the General Strike, it has felt the obligation to assume the leadership of the fight against the miners.

(4) *Trades Union Congress General Council* is composed of represetatives from the several union interests, who, because they have no common class-struggle basis, are not yet capable of representing the movement as a whole. Unwillingly forced into the General Strike by the Government, they called it off as soon as possible, leaving the miners to fight alone and causing a debâcle of trade unionism by the manner of their calling off. The General Council, before the lock-out, was divisible into Left, Centre and Right. But they were unanimous in calling it off. Thus composed, and with this record, the General Council had, by its act of May 12, incapacitated itself for some time thereafter from bringing further assistance to the miners. Besides, they were most of them in favour of the miners accepting a wage reduction.

(5) *The British Trade Unions.* Deprived for the time being of a central lead, the separate trade unions were thrown back on their own resources. That is to say, some have helped the miners by grants ; others have been mainly absorbed in rebuilding their own funds " squandered " in the Nine Days' Strike and have paid little further attention to the miners.

(6) *The Trade Unions of other Countries.*—From every other country help pours in to the British miners ; from Soviet Russia far above and beyond every other working class. But the boycott of coal began to cease after the General Strike was called off, and this most effective form of international help is not yet again manifest.

(7) *The Miners' International.*—This body expresses good-will to

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the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, but the miners in Germany, France, America, &c., are not stopping the production of coal, by which action they would also stimulate the transport workers to cease moving the coal already in stock. This ineffectiveness of the Miners' International is one of the strongest arguments for trade union unity.

(8) *Soviet Union Workers.*—The gift of well-nigh £400,000 from the trade unionists of the U.S.S.R. is an act of solidarity on so gigantic a scale as to place the Russian workers in the forefront of the world's proletariat, were they not there already. By this act, the Russian workers have made themselves an important party in the dispute. They, and not the Miners' International, have proved themselves to be the miners' closest ally. This 100 per cent. effectiveness of the Soviet workers is the strongest example of trade union unity.

(9) *The Labour Parliamentarians* were for the first seven weeks almost all in favour of a speedy termination of the dispute, if necessary with a reduction of wages. MacDonald, Thomas and Clynes took up their parable against the General Strike. Snowden advocated unity of interest between capital and labour on the field of industry at the same time as he was advocating a Liberal-Labour Alliance in his politics. As a party to the dispute, they may be reckoned as having weakened the miners. For one brief week, MacDonald came perilously near to being against the Trades Union Congress as well, until it was recalled to him that the Trade Unions, in the words of scripture, " held the bag."

(10) *The Liberal Party* is, apart from the person of Lloyd George, chiefly represented by the Liberal newspaper press. This has backed the Report of the Coal Commission and the Samuel recommendations in an attempt to represent the general interests of progressive capitalism against the mineowners—and of course, in its courteous way, against the miners.

(11) *The Conservative Press*, now thoroughly puzzled about the dispute, has fallen back on the simple policy of rousing bourgeois class feeling to white heat by repeated attacks on the miners' leaders, on the working miners and on their allies, the Russian workers.

(12) *The I.L.P.*, at present in the hands of the Left Wing

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group, has criticised the General Council and demanded support for the miners. This appears in the *New Leader* (the official organ of the I.L.P.), edited by Brailsford, in *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, and in the speeches of John Wheatley. On the other hand, the I.L.P. has weakened the miners by putting forward such nostrums as a capitalist selling agency instead of nationalisation (which turns out to have been merely an ikon on the wall), and have expressed their approval of the Samuel recommendations.

(13) *The Communist Party* has supported the miners throughout, both in the General Strike and in the weeks that followed. Its attitude during the nine months that preceded the General Strike, the activities of its members during the Strike, and finally the behaviour of the General Council have had the effect of adding hundreds to its membership every week. The Communists number one-thousandth of the organised workers ; its members numbered one-tenth of those arrested under the police terrorism of the Emergency Powers Act. It thus becomes a factor in the struggle. It is not for nothing that the Government launches a special attack upon it by the publication of the beautifully printed Blue Book containing correspondence "lifted" during the police raid last autumn.

(14) *The Working Class*—which in this instance is to be carefully distinguished from the bureaucracy of the Trade Unions—is, as a whole, sympathetic. Money pours in from shop collections. Individual class-conscious workers pawn their belongings to help the miners in their struggle. Never since the Dock Strike of 1889 has there been such sympathy. It is more than sympathy—it is solidarity. As never before in Britain, the miners' struggle is felt and realised as a class struggle.

The Two Battle Fronts

Each day, the Press varies its fantastic, if flattering picture of the miners' leaders as "Never, Never Men," by some tale about "Pits re-opening," "Men repudiating Cook," "Herbert Smith gives Way," "Cook Sues for Peace," "Miners' New Demand," "Government's New Line," till in the end, not only is the middle class reader (including in this class not a few Trade Union

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Officials) thoroughly bemused, but the Press scribes themselves begin to think the noise of their printing machines to be the actual voice of the coal mines. Each day brings Fleet Street the need to create a bright clangorous universe anew : and so by Thursday the world (in the newspapers) may be quite different from what it was on Tuesday (in the newspapers) ; though neither Tuesday's world not Thursday's world are anything like the world of sober fact. Yet so limited is each man's personal experience within the complexities of capitalism that of the false coinage uttered daily he is simply not in a position to detect the falsity or otherwise of more than five per cent. of it. In this way the workers are " governed."

The facts, however, as to the miners' position are very simple and have not suffered any change since the National Conference of April 9.

(15) *The Miners' Standpoint.*—On June 12, an appeal to all Trade Unions was issued by the four officials of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, in which it was said :—

> Our Executive, basing itself on the decisions of our Conferences, reinforced by the determined spirit shown by our members in every coalfield, declares that the only possible basis for a settlement is :—
>
> (1) The immediate reorganisation of the industry in order to remove the waste and inefficiency revealed by repeated enquiries.
>
> (2) Maintenance of the national basis of the wage agreement.
>
> (3) Maintenance of wages at not less than those ruling prior to the lock-out, in view of the fact that such wages are already much too low, and cannot be reduced without inflicting even more severe hardships and privation on our members.
>
> (4) Maintenance of hours and other conditions as before the lock-out.
>
> On these points we are further encouraged to offer a stubborn resistance by our appreciation of the fact that any weakness on our part, while providing no remedy whatever for the coal problem, would be followed by the extension of wage cuts and longer hours to the workers in other industries. This is recognised by the whole Trade Union Movement, which has repeatedly pledged its support for the stand we are taking.

Reorganisation to the miners means Nationalisation. But at the moment, while completely and correctly sceptical of anything short of nationalisation, the Miners' Federation of Great Britain would not oppose the attempt to put into practice the meagre reorganisation proposals set forth this Spring in the Report of the Coal Commission.

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(16) *The Coalowners' Standpoint.*—The Coalowners still demand :—

(1) An all-round reduction of wages, averaging thirteen and a-third per cent. on standard rates.

(2) One hour more to be worked per day and piece rates to be reduced correspondingly, *i.e.*, by about 14.2 per cent.

Their second demand is diametrically opposed to the no-change recommendation of the Coal Report of the Royal Commission. But the coalowners turned their backs to the Royal Commission as soon as it had reported, saying at the same time, there was no discourtesy intended.

(17) *The Government* has taken four lines :—

(1) Mr. Baldwin said he would accept the Coal Commission Report and put its recommendations, including wage cuts, into practice, if the other two parties, miners and mineowners, would accept it.

(2) Mr. Baldwin, just before the General Strike, said he would promise much and perform much if only the miners would consent *in advance* to take less wages.

(3) *After* the General Strike, Mr. Baldwin, ignoring the Samuel Recommendations, proposed a 10 per cent. wage cut, followed by a further cut three months later, the amount of which was to be decided by compulsory arbitration. If both sides accepted, said Baldwin from his Olympus, he would grant £3,000,000 to the industry. But neither party would have this award of the great impartial Jupiter. The miners refused to be fleeced and the mineowners wanted longer hours. Jupiter, king of the gods, sends a lofty message to these erring mortals, deploring the attitude of both.

(4) A month elapses. The god descends to earth and assumes the shape of a coalowner—Mr. Baldwin announces that reorganisation is eye-wash and *longer hours* are the goods. This attack on hours of labour and this disregard of the sybilline utterances of the Coal Commission are each put forward as a parliamentary bill on June 21.

Thus the Government has openly joined forces with the mineowners and formed with them a single battle front.

(18) *The General Council of the T.U.C.* had been faced by a difficult position, following on the General Strike. Thousands of workers being victimised wanted the General Council to tell them the reason why. They decided to reserve their defence and fixed a Conference of Trade Union Executives for June 25, by which time it was expected the miners' struggle would be finished. As June 25 approached and there was no sign of the miners' defeat it became more and more difficult to face the Conference. Not that

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they feared the Conference : such a Conference, they had little doubt, would in its infinite mercy wash all their sins away. But because such a Conference would also, in its infinite justice, condemn the miners in the same measure as it condoned the General Council, its final effect would be to range the General Council publicly on the side of Baldwin. Some of them did not shrink from this conclusion. But a majority were against it. At this moment, Baldwin's trumpets sounded for the onset upon hours of labour. The General Council took the opportunity and proposed to the miners a postponement of the Conference, together with a united defence of hours of labour. The miners' leaders striving after unity, if only an appearance of unity, agreed to sign the General Council's deed of postponement.

But the General Council cannot recall the General Strike. They have shot that bolt. What they *can* do is to impose an embargo on the import and transport of coal and to levy all trade unionists a weekly 5 per cent. for the miners so as not to fall behind the example set by Russian trade unionists. What they *will* do remains to be seen.

(19) *The Liberal Party's* attitude as shown by its Press has already been mentioned. Mr. Lloyd George, the most astute politician of the the capitalist world, carried this attitude much further. He " sympathises " openly with the miners. He ridicules the Government and its Jix for their scaremongering attempt to stop the Russian workers' money in aid of the miners. He laughs at their Blue Books and defends the Labour Party front bench against both Jix and the Communists. In a perfectly magnificent blending of religiosity and (time-expired) revolutionary fervour—the bourgeois revolution be it understood—the one-time advocate of " the knock-out blow " extols Christ, *le bon sans-culotte*, as the exponent of Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood. He domiciles the French Revolution and even gets it to breed with the native Nonconformity of England : and their offspring is to be a new Social Gospel that will sweep away the slums without seriously hindering the increased rate of exploitation. MacDonald is thrown into the shade. Meantime Lloyd George, consistent with his advocacy of " coal and power," pushes forward the Report of the Royal Commission and attacks the Government for going against

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that Report. In all this attitude of Mr. Lloyd George there is great significance.

What does it mean ? It means that Baldwin has made a serious mistake, first in flouting the Report of the Coal Commission, second in coming down so openly on the side of the coalowners. And the former mistake is the worse.

From the point of view of twentieth century capitalism, coal production in Britain is a backward industry. Only the special conditions of the years 1900 to 1920 enabled it to survive with its present obsolete and Victorian methods of organisation. In the *general* interests of capitalism the coal industry should be re-organised and trustified. Baldwin has preferred the sectional interests of the coalowners (he is one himself) to the general interests of capitalism. For this he will suffer in the future. And Lloyd George may expect to gain in the next scene-shifting of the political stage, because he has understood better that the crisis gave an opportunity not only to beat down the miners, but also to humble the coalowners, to scrap their obsolete methods and start on a level with their German competitors.

Further, Baldwin, obsessed by his all too simple strategy of "smashing the Miners' Strike," has thrown away the mask of State impartiality much too lightly. It is true the farce could not be played on much longer : but many will feel that Baldwin gave away the game too soon. The Conservative Government of 1900 was a mineowners' Government — the mines were on the Witwatersrand. It fell, and great was the fall thereof. Baldwin's Government is a mineowners' Government. Herein Lloyd George reads its doom. Many for this cause will vote for him. Many amongst the Right Wing Labour parliamentarians will feel fascinated by the "Sanity" of his viewpoint and by his "democratic soul." So, thinks Lloyd George, perhaps . . . perhaps . . . And as he thinks he glances towards the Right Wing Labour Benches, and sees there looks that meet his own.

Economic Background

(20) *Hard Facts.*—The opinion is now prevalent that the Report of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry, 1925, while in its recommendations it may have been studiously vague (the usual

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offspring of formal unanimity), put forward in its survey a complete and correct analysis. The survey is usually referred to as "the hard facts" of the coal industry. Publicists, Trade Union Officials, Labour peers and others all assume the validity of the Commission's survey, and hold it as proved that the "economics" of mining will not permit of reorganisations without some sacrifice by the miners.

But, what if the Report of the Coal Commission is not the New Testament of the coal industry? What if the Report is a skilful political document, whose main purpose was to create just this belief, that the miners had a hopeless case? What if the boot is on the other foot, and it is the capitalists who have a hopeless case? Then it is clear we have yet to find the "hard facts," and to se them in their proper light.

The Report set out to find a solution for the troubles of the coal industry within the bounds of that industry. They ruled out coke and by-product workers, they ruled out the ancillary industries. They carefully avoid reaching any conclusions that bore upon the world outside Britain. It was their business to find a solution within the bounds of the industry and they found it in wage cuts for the present and reorganisations in the future.

But, what if the solution of the difficulties of the coal industry is not to be discovered within its narrow bounds? In such a case the Report would have condemned itself to sterility, and its conclusions would be null.

The three obvious remedies for the troubles of the coal industry were :—

(1) Restoration of markets abroad.
(2) Restoration of the home market.
(3) Reorganisation.

(21) *The Foreign Markets* shrank and dwindled after the war from a variety of causes, such as Reparations, new coal fields, new sources of power substituting coal, &c. Reparations, laid down by the Treaty of Versailles and brought to fruition under the Dawes Plan, have undoubtedly affected British coal exports. On this point the Commission forebore to say anything definite. Yet they had before them the fact that Mussolini had promised to pay a yearly tribute of millions of pounds to Great Britain; that he could

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only pay by some transfer of goods ; that German Reparations coal was now entering the Italian market to the tune of four millions of tons per annum instead of a meagre million tons pre-war ; and that British coal imports into Italy had correspondingly diminished by a similar amount. If these figures mean anything at all, they mean that from the point of view of the British coal industry the Dawes Plan should be scrapped and the Treaty of Versailles torn up. To reach such a conclusion, to propose such a thing would have been to lay hands on the Ark of the Covenant. It would have been to confess a contradiction between the interests of the coal capitalists and the general politics of the British bourgeoisie. The Commission carefully abstained.

(22) *The Home Market* is much more important than the Foreign Market, and also, strange as it may seem, much more elastic. The simple and childlike economics of the coalowners runs somewhat upon this line, that if you can only lower the price of coal by cutting wages sufficiently, there is bound to be a market for it. Behind this there appears to be a vague idea that people eat coal ; that if you only brought the price low enough, cannibals of the river Congo would gladly consume it. This is wrong. You cannot, by no matter what lowering of the price, get people to put coal into their mouths, but if you can put coal into the mouths of the gaping blast furnaces, scores and scores of which are standing idle in this country, then you have found a market for coal, you have found the people who will really eat it. In other words, restore the metal industry, set on foot again the manufacture of iron and steel and general engineering, and you will then find a market for your coal in abundance. For into every ton of steel there goes four tons of coal.

Where is the market for iron and steel ? The answer is the needs of the hundred and forty millions of Russian peasants and workers. If they are given credits they will buy manufactured metal goods to the extent of at least one hundred million pounds.

But here at once there comes a snag. To admit this obvious partial solution would be to admit that the Labour Government were right in their proposed guarantee of a hundred millions loan to Soviet Russia to be spent mainly in purchases from Britain.

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It would mean that once more there was a contradiction between the interests of the coal capitalists and the foreign politics of the British bourgeoisie.

(23) *Reorganisation* is a crying need, and the form it must take is Nationalisation. Anything short of that is mere patchwork. Only on condition of getting rid of the parasites and leeches that cling to the production of coal and hinder its effectiveness can this industry hope to be efficient. But, needless to say, the purpose of the Royal Commission was to turn down Nationalisation, and to destroy as far as possible the hopes raised by the Sankey Commission of 1919. It is on this question of Nationalisation that the Liberals and Conservatives part company. The Liberals, who more nearly represent the newest forms and tendencies of Capital, are in favour of large scale production and trustification ; the Conservatives have accepted the idea of maintaining the *status quo*.

Since the Coal Commission, still more the Tory Government, and most of all the palaeolithic coalowners, are resolved to have nothing to do with any of those wider solutions, they are driven back on the temporary solution of a wage cut. It is a temporary solution because in a few months the advantage gained on the foreign market (they hope for a cut of 3s. per ton in price) would be overtaken by corresponding cuts in the wages of foreign workers. There would come another wage cut and then another and so on. What prevents this series of temporary solutions ? Simply the fact that the working class will not agree to it. They have little enough to live on as it is. Therefore, here we are presented in the clearest possible form with the contradiction in modern Imperialism that it seeks only for temporary stabilisation and that this stabilisation can only be got by cuts in wages. Steering their ship along this course, the bourgeoisie are bound to run against the rock of working-class resistance.

The Keys of Victory

(24) *Money plus Embargo.*—At this moment, at the end of the ninth week, the question of victory or defeat can be put in very simple terms. It is this. How soon can the owners, backed by the Government, starve out the miners and their wives and families ? How soon will the few thousand effective owners, the few score

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members of the Government and the few hundreds of big coal-owners, succeed by means of their control of State resources and by their ownership of the mines in a society based on private property in starving out between three and four millions of the population of this country? Or will enough money be forth-coming to keep the miners going while the embargo on the move-ment of coal slowly compels the other side to give way. The tactics of the owners and the Government are to starve them out. Quite correctly from his point of view Lord Hunsdon spoke against giving money in aid of the starving wives and children. Lord Hunsdon believes in waging the class war ruthlessly; Quite naturally also Jix and the others have shown themselves ready to risk war in order to stop the money coming from the Russian workers.

Will the Labour Movement, will the workers in every country take as clear a view as Lord Hunsdon and Jix and the others? Above all, will they respond in time? If the twenty-five million and more trade unionists of the world respond in anything like the way the Russian workers have done, the miners and their wives and children can be fed and remain on the field until the end of this year. This is the real test of International Trade Union Unity.

But the embargo is the speedier method of ending the struggle. If they (Baldwin & Co.) would starve the British miners into submission, the transport workers of this and other countries could, by refusing to move coal, starve the British industries into sub-mission. There is no other way out, no other choice.

Will the transport workers, railwaymen, dockers, stevedores, longshoremen, sailors and firemen—both British, French, Belgian, German, Dutch and American and all other countries—be bold and make this fateful choice that will force the miners' enemies to sue for peace?

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THE RANK AND FILE AND THE GENERAL STRIKE

By JACK TANNER

IT is too soon yet to gauge or to understand fully what effect the General Strike will have upon the working-class movement. Much has been written already in the Labour Press on the subject. Books and pamphlets have been published outlining the history of it, the events that led to its taking place, and detailing progress from day to day. Articles have appeared analysing the factors that caused it, and that were responsible for its being called off.

Much more must be written and said, however, before a complete understanding of this great event can be obtained. All the facts are not yet known, and it is probable the rank and file of the Unions will never get to know the full story of what transpired in high places, or have an opportunity to appreciate all the elements, economic, historic, political, and personal, that influenced the General Council in its decisions. A complete survey of the general strike has yet to be made, and if all the factors can be collated, analysed, and their effects apportioned accurately, such a work will be of inestimable value to the working-class movement—a real Revolutionists' handbook.

A summary of the effects it has had upon the workers will not be the least difficult or least important part of such a work. At the present time it is only possible to give a brief and cursory outline of the thoughts and feelings of the rank and file.

While the theoreticians are theorising, and Labour writers are filling pages, while Trade Union leaders are orating—or remaining silent, according to their responsibilities and understanding of loyalty to the General Council—the members of the unions, the men and women who were in the struggle, have thoughts, feelings and impressions of the strike, that become more concrete and definite every day. Whether those thoughts and impressions are correct and justified is not the question. They are there. Circum-

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stances and experiences have created them, and that they are in the main unfavourable to the leaders is generally known.

It has been said that it is not a question of criticism of this or that individual leader ; that abuse and condemnation of them will not help to a clearer understanding of the position. This is a cold and logical outlook ; one needs to have a knowledge of most of the facts that operated, and be somewhat detached also, to see things from such a standpoint. But the workers have not the knowledge, nor can they detach themselves, they can only judge things from a casual viewpoint, and from the immediate and material results of any action, or the lack of them.

The average general feeling is not against any particular individuals ; the whole General Council has been condemned. Its members, having apparently agreed among themselves to hang together, are being condemned together. That they have been condemned unheard is their own fault. If they choose to delay a full explanation indefinitely, they must not grumble if the workers form conclusions that may be wrong.

The general strike was called to assist the miners. This was clearly understood by all who took part in it. It was to prevent a reduction in wages, to prevent an increase in working hours, and interference with the principle of national agreements. The general strike did not achieve this, these issues are still unsettled. There has been no material or practical gain as a result of it. The splendid solidarity displayed, the sacrifices made seem to the average trade unionist to have been wasted. Nothing concrete or tangible has resulted.

Who is to blame for this " No decision " contest ? Not the workers, for their actions exceeded all expectations. There was no weakening on their part.

Amongst the ordinary members of the rank and file, the good average trade unionists, the members who have no very definite political opinions, the bulk of the T.U. membership, the opinion is that the General Council is to blame.

Their feelings can be summed up in three words : disappointent, disillusion and disgust. Disappointment at the calling off of the strike, when they felt so strongly that success was near at hand.

They knew the whole-hearted response to the call in their own

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district, and they know now that that response was the same nationally. They knew that the full power of the unions had not been exercised, that the strike had not become really general, when it was called off. It was a sort of semi-private row, and not every trade unionist could join in.

The workers have been disillusioned as to the impartiality of the Government, a belief that still prevailed to a considerable extent. The use of the army and navy, the display of tanks, armoured cars, submarines, destroyers, tin hats and rifles, has given them a pretty clear indication of what they will have to face in future struggles. The operation of the Emergency Powers Act; the organisation of the upper and middle classes in the O.M.S., special constabulary, &c., demonstrated to what extent the governing class will go when they think their position is threatened.

Whatever the General Council may have thought and said—and they did stress the point—that the general strike was not against Constitutional Government, the workers know perfectly well now that Constitutional Government was against the general strike. A certain degree of disgust is felt and expressed at the attitude of the leaders in giving up the fight, without adequate reasons. Whatever explanation may be given by the General Council in the future will not remove from the minds of the workers the belief that it was called off through fear of it developing into something that would force the General Council to declare *their* position much more definitely than they have done now.

Cynical comments are made in regard to the message of the General Council to all trade unionists, at the opening of the second week of the strike.

" Stand firm, be loyal to instructions, and trust your leaders." They did this all the time the strike was on. They stood firm, and displayed unexpected and unexampled loyalty. They trusted their leaders.

There is a feeling now that it would have probably been better if they had " trussed " them.

The counter-attack of the employers after the termination of the strike was apparently never considered or expected. Thousands of good trade unionists are " on the stones " as a consequence.

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They are among the most class-conscious and active members of the unions. They have acted as shop stewards, members of councils of action, delegates on strike committees, &c. They have been the leaders in their shops and factories, the driving forces in their particular districts, always a dangerous position economically, always liable to be "sniped" for their activities. These men have felt the full blast of the counter-attack, and this has happened in spite of the splendid spirit of the workers, thousands of whom kept up the struggle for days after the strike was called off, acting on the slogan "All back or none" in an endeavour to prevent the victimisation of their more active fellow workers.

After the signing of the agreement by the railway unions, followed then by many others of a similar character, it was felt that the principle had been lost, and it became a matter of self-preservation. The spirit of "all for each and each for all" changed to one of each for himself.

Agreements and conditions that had taken years of struggle to obtain went by the board. Movements for better conditions that had been afoot long enough, and that were reaching a stage of development, now stand still. This applies particularly to the engineering workers' claim for a 20s. per week increase.

Just previous to the general strike, the ballot vote for strike action to enforce the demand in the London District began among the members of the sixteen unions affiliated to the London Engineering Trades Committee. The vote was returnable at the end of May, and many branches had not voted when the general strike took place. Those that had, showed a good majority for strike action. Following the strike the returns are very poor, though showing a majority in favour. Many members have refused to vote, in a belief that the time is not now opportune to force the issue, particularly in view of the continuation of the miners' struggle. Many of the big engineering firms are easing off production and discharging workers, due it is said to the lack of fuel and materials.

The engineering workers nationally were looking to London to strike the first real blow to obtain the £1 increase. They were prepared to give the fullest possible support to the London men,

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and would have been willing to face a national lock-out on the issue, given some assurance of support from the general T.U. Movement. But that assurance is not now likely to be forthcoming, for the miners' case still fills the horizon. By better leadership, organisation, propaganda and publicity they have been able to obtain the official support of the T.U. Movement, and they will continue to get the fullest financial and moral support of the whole working class.

The Engineering Unions missed the tide, and it is now on the ebb. Preparations must now be made by intensive and extensive agitation and organisation to take advantage of the earliest opportunity to force the issue of the wage increase. It will not be long before the tide will again be at the flood, and London must be ready to move on it.

Some criticism has been made by the rank and file at the lack of anything like definite instructions from the T.U.C., or even from the respective E.C.'s of the unions involved in the general strike. This criticism is hardly justified in view of the difficulties of communication during the struggle. As a result of the failure to obtain a clear interpretation of the General Council's instructions to the trades ceasing work, the local strike organisations took power unto themselves, which in the majority of cases was accepted without question, by the workers. Acting on the principle of "when in doubt, call all out," the councils of action and strike committees drew out men who according to the General Council, were in the second and third line of defence, or attack. This was all to the good, so far as the actual strike was concerned, but probably resulted in more victimisation on resumption.

Though many of the unions were not in a position to pay full strike benefits, there has been comparatively little complaint by members of the financial loss incurred by them. Practically all the unions paid some benefit. The workers appreciated the position; they did not come out to get something for themselves. It was a matter of giving, and they showed they were prepared to make a sacrifice.

One of the most hopeful and surprising results of the call to action was the response of the non-unionists. In many factories with only a small minority of organised workers, all ceased work.

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On such an issue, with such an object, class feeling prevailed. Of course there was also a mass pyschology operating. This was the biggest thing the workers had known since August, 1914. They wanted to be in it, it was action, a change, something real and big.

There was also the uncertainty about it all. What would it lead to ? How would it end ? Who could remain in a workshop or factory, doing the ordinary every-day job, working at the bench or tending a machine, when millions of their fellows were on the streets, and when anything might happen ? Being human, they could not help themselves, and left work holus-bolus, unionist or "non." These non-unionists realise more than ever they did before the power of organisation and mass action. They know it was not that trade unionism was defeated, but that the towel was thrown in the ring. That the General Council did not want the strike to develop into anything like a revolutionary situation is saying what everyone knows and admits. This also applies to the attitude of the average worker at the beginning of the strike, who felt that all he was called upon to do was to help the miners.

But after the first week this outlook changed somewhat. They were in the fight and up against all employers and the State. They began to realise that, and were prepared to continue. The British workers have shown they can and will fight if given a lead, and are prepared to go further than they were taken by the General Council during the nine days.

Those nine days will have a tremendous effect upon the Labour Movement generally. It has had its biggest lesson yet in the class war; the experiences will not be wasted upon the workers. They have gained confidence in themselves and their organisations. The rank and file know they are greater than their present leaders.

The general strike will mark the beginning of a different mental outlook for the rank and file in the trade unions. They will demand a greater, a more courageous and honest leadership. They will object to being preached at, instructed and led by men who have not these proven qualifications.

Let us hope the rank and file at the Trades Union Congress in September will put into operation some of the changes that the general strike has shown are so urgently needed.

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PEACE UTOPIAS

By ROSA LUXEMBURG

(*In view of the renewed attempts being made to revive the dreams of peace and disarmament within the capitalist order, in the same manner as before the last war, the following article of Rosa Luxemburg, dating from the theoretical controversy with Social Democracy before the last war, is peculiarly apposite as a statement of the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism. The article was published in the "Leipzigir Volkzeitung" of May 6 and 8, 1911, and reprinted in a shorter form in "Die Internationale"—the journal founded by Rosa Luxemburg—of January, 1926, from which this version is taken.*—Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.)

WHAT is our task in the question of peace? It does not consist merely in vigorously demonstrating at all times the love of peace of the Social Democrats ; but first and foremost our task is to make clear to the masses of people the nature of militarism and sharply and clearly to bring out the differences in principle between the standpoint of the Social Democrats and that of the bourgeois peace enthusiasts.

Wherein does this difference lie ? Certainly not merely in the fact that the bourgeois apostles of peace are relying on the influence of fine words, while we do not depend on words alone. Our very points of departure are diametrically opposed : the friends of peace in bourgeois circles believe that world peace and disarmament can be realised within the frame-work of the present social order, whereas we, who base ourselves on the materialistic conception of history and on scientific socialism, are convinced that militarism can only be abolished from the world with the destruction of the capitalist class state. From this follows the mutual opposition of our tactics in propagating the idea of peace. The bourgeois friends of peace are endeavouring—and from their point of view this is perfectly logical and explicable—to invent all sorts of "practical" projects for gradually restraining militarism, and are naturally inclined to consider every outward apparent sign of a tendency toward peace as the genuine article, to take every expression of the ruling diplomacy in this vein at its

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word, to exaggerate it into a basis for earnest activity. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, must consider it their duty in this matter, just as in all matters of social criticism, to expose the bourgeois attempts to restrain militarism as pitiful half-measures, and the expressions of such sentiments on the part of the governing circles as diplomatic make-believe, and to oppose the bourgeois claims and pretences with the ruthless analysis of capitalist reality.

From this same standpoint the tasks of the Social Democrats with regard to the declarations of the kind made by the British Government can only be to show up the idea of a partial limitation of armaments, in all its impracticability, as a half-measure, and to endeavour to make it clear to the people that militarism is closely linked up with colonial politics, with tariff politics, and with international politics, and that therefore the present Nations, if they really seriously and honestly wish to call a halt on competitive armaments, would have to begin by disarming in the commercial political field, give up colonial predatory campaigns and the international politics of spheres of influence in all parts of the world—in a word, in their foreign as well as in their domestic politics would have to do the exact contrary of everything which the nature of the present politics of a capitalist class state demands. And thus would be clearly explained what constitutes the kernel of the Social Democratic conception, that militarism in both its forms—as war and as armed peace—is a legitimate child, a logical result of capitalism, which can only be overcome with the destruction of capitalism, and that hence whoever honestly desires world peace and liberation from the tremendous burden of armaments must also desire Socialism. Only in this way can real Social Democratic enlightenment and recruiting be carried on in connection with the armaments debate.

This work, however, will be rendered somewhat difficult and the attitude of the Social Democrats will become obscure and vacillating if, by some strange exchange of rôles, our Party tries on the contrary to convince the bourgeois State that it can quite well limit armaments and bring about peace and that it can do this from its own standpoint, from that of a capitalist class State.

It has until now been the pride and the firm scientific basis of our Party, that not only the general lines of our programme but

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also the slogans of our practical every-day policy were not invented out of odds and ends as something desirable, but that in all things we relied on our knowledge of the tendencies of social development and made the objective lines of this development the basis of our attitude. For us the determining factor until now has not been the possibility from the standpoint of the relation of forces within the State, but the possibility from the standpoint of the tendencies of development of society. The limitation of armaments, the retrenchment of militarism, does not coincide with the further development of international capitalism. Only those who believe in the mitigation and blunting of class antagonisms, and in the checking of the economic anarchy of capitalism, can believe in the possibility of these international conflicts allowing themselves to be slackened, to be mitigated and wiped out. For the international antagonisms of the capitalist states are but the complement of class antagonisms, and the world political anarchy but the reverse side of the anarchic system of production of capitalism. Both can grow only together and be overcome only together. "A little order and peace" is, therefore, just as impossible, just as much a petty-bourgeois Utopia, with regard to the capitalist world market as to world politics, and with regard to the limitation of crises as to the limitation of armaments.

Let us cast a glance at the events of the last fifteen years of international development. Where do they show any tendency toward peace, toward disarmament, toward settlement of conflicts by arbitration?

During these fifteen years we had this: in 1895 the war between Japan and China, which is the prelude to the East Asiatic period of imperialism; in 1898 the war between Spain and the United States; in 1899-1902 the British Boer War in South Africa; in 1900 the campaign of the European powers in China; in 1904 the Russo-Japanese War; in 1904-07 the German Herero War in Africa; and then there was also the military intervention of Russia in 1908 in Persia, at the present moment the military intervention of France in Morocco, without mentioning the incessant colonial skirmishes in Asia and in Africa. Hence the bare facts alone show that for fifteen years hardly a year has gone by without some war activity.

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But more important still is the after effect of these wars. The war with China was followed in Japan by a military reorganisation which made it possible ten years later to undertake the war against Russia and which made Japan the predominant military power in the Pacific. The Boer War resulted in a military reorganisation of England, the strengthening of her armed forces on land. The war with Spain inspired the United States to reorganise its navy and moved it to enter colonial politics with imperialist interests in Asia, and thus was created the germ of the antagonism of interests between the United States and Japan in the Pacific. The Chinese campaign was accompanied in Germany by a thorough military reorganisation, the great Navy Law of 1900, which marks the beginning of the competition of Germany with England on the sea and the sharpening of the antagonisms between these two nations.

But there is another and extremely important factor besides : the social and political awakening of the hinterlands, of the colonies and the " spheres of interest," to independent life. The revolution in Turkey, in Persia, the revolutionary ferment in China, in India, in Egypt, in Arabia, in Morocco, in Mexico, all these are also starting points of world political antagonisms, tensions, military activities and armaments. It was just during the course of this fifteen years that the points of friction in international politics have increased to an unparalleled degree, a number of new States stepped into active struggle on the international stage, all the Great Powers underwent a thorough military reorganisation. The antagonisms, in consequence of all these events, have reached an acuteness never known before, and the process is going further and further, since on the one hand the ferment in the Orient is increasing from day to day, and on the other every settlement between the military powers unavoidably becomes the starting point for fresh conflicts. The Reval Entente between Russia, Great Britain and France, which Jaurès hailed as a guarantee for world peace, led to the sharpening of the crisis in the Balkans, accelerated the outbreak of the Turkish Revolution, encouraged Russia to military action in Persia and led to a rapprochement between Turkey and Germany which, in its turn, rendered the Anglo-German antagonisms more acute. The Potsdam agreement resulted

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in the sharpening of the crisis in China and the Russo-Japanese agreement had the same effect.

Therefore, on a mere reckoning with facts, to refuse to realise that these facts give rise to anything rather than a mitigation of the international conflicts, of any sort of disposition toward world peace, is wilfully to close one's eyes.

In view of all this, how is it possible to speak of tendencies toward peace in bourgeois development which are supposed to neutralise and overcome its tendencies toward war? Wherein are they expressed?

In Sir Edward Grey's declaration and that of the French Parliament? In the "armament weariness" of the bourgeoisie? But the middle and petty bourgeois sections of the bourgeoisie have always been groaning at the burden of militarism, just as they groan at the devastation of free competition, at the economic crises, at the lack of conscience shown in stock exchange speculations, at the terrorism of the cartels and trusts. The tyranny of the trust magnates in America has even called forth a rebellion of broad masses of the people and a wearisome legal procedure against the trusts on the part of the State authorities. Do the Social Democrats interpret this as a symptom of the beginning of the limitation of trust development, or have they not rather a sympathetic shrug of the shoulders for that petty-bourgeois rebellion and a scornful smile for that State campaign? The "dialectic" of the peace tendency of capitalist development, which was supposed to have cut across its war tendency and to have overcome it, simply confirms the old truth that the roses of capitalist profit-making and class domination also have thorns for the bourgeoisie, which it prefers to wear as long as possible round its suffering head, in spite of all pain and woe, rather than get rid of it along with the head on the advice of the Social Democrats.

To explain this to the masses, ruthlessly to scatter all illusions with regard to attempts made at peace on the part of the bourgeoisie and to declare the proletarian revolution as the first and only step toward world peace—that is the task of the Social Democrats with regard to all disarmament trickeries, whether they are invented in Petersburg, London or Berlin.

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The Utopianism of the standpoint which expects an era of peace and retrenchment of militarism in the present social order is plainly revealed in the fact that it is having recourse to project making. For it is typical of Utopian strivings that, in order to demonstrate their practicability, they hatch "practical" recipes with the greatest possible details. To this also belongs the project of the "United States of Europe" as a basis for the limitation of international militarism.

"We support all efforts," said Comrade *Ledebour* in his speech in the Reichstag on April 3, "which aim at getting rid of the threadbare pretexts for the incessant war armaments. We demand the economic and political union of the European states. I am firmly convinced that, while it is certain to come during the period of Socialism, it can also come to pass before that time, that we will live to see the UNITED STATES OF EUROPE, as confronted at present by the business competition of the United States of America. At least we demand that capitalist society, that capitalist statesmen, in the interests of capitalist development in Europe itself, in order that Europe will later not be completely submerged in world competition, prepare for this union of Europe into the United States of Europe."

And in the *Neue Zeit* of April 28, Comrade Kautsky writes :—

> . . . . For a lasting duration of peace, which banishes the ghost of war forever, there is only one way to-day : the union of the states of European civilisation into a league with a common commercial policy, a league parliament, a league government and a league army—the formation of the United States of Europe. Were this to succeed, then a tremendous step would be achieved. Such a United States would possess such a superiority of forces that without any war they could compel all the other nations which do not voluntarily join them to liquidate their armies and give up their fleets. But in that case all necessity for armaments for the new United States themselves would disappear. They would be in a position not only to relinquish all further armaments, give up the standing army and all aggressive weapons on the sea, which we are demanding to-day, but even give up all means of defence, the militia system itself. Thus the era of permanent peace would surely begin.

Plausible as the idea of the United States of Europe as a peace arrangement may seem to some at first glance, it has on closer

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examination not the least thing in common with the method of thought and the standpoint of social democracy.

As adherents of the materialist conception of history, we have always adopted the standpoint that the modern States as political structures are not artificial products of a creative phantasy, like, for instance, the Duchy of Warsaw of Napoleonic memory, but historical products of economic development.

But what economic foundation lies at the bottom of the idea of a European State Federation ? Europe, it is true, is a geographical and, within certain limits, an historical cultural conception. But the idea of Europe as an economic unit contradicts capitalist development in two ways. First of all there exist within Europe among the capitalist States—and will so long as these exist—the most violent struggles of competition and antagonisms, and secondly the European States can no longer get along economically without the non-European countries. As suppliers of foodstuffs, raw materials and wares, also as consumers of the same, the other parts of the world are linked in a thousand ways with Europe. At the present stage of development of the world market and of world economy, the conception of Europe as an isolated economic unit is a sterile concoction of the brain. Europe no more forms a special unit within world economy than does Asia or America.

And if the idea of a European union in the economic sense has long been outstripped, this is no less the case in the political sense.

The times when the centre of gravity of political development and the crystallising agent of capitalist contradictions lay on the European continent, are long gone by. To-day Europe is only a link in the tangled chain of international connections and contradictions. And what is of decisive significance—European antagonisms themselves no longer play their rôle on the European continent but in all parts of the world and on all the seas.

Only were one suddenly to lose sight of all these happenings and manœuvres, and to transfer oneself back to the blissful times of the European concert of powers, could one say, for instance, that for forty years we have had uninterrupted peace. This conception, which considers only events on the European continent, does not notice that the very reason why we have had no war in Europe for

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decades is the fact that international antagonisms have grown infinitely beyond the narrow confines of the European continent, and that European problems and interests are now fought out on the world seas and in the by-corners of Europe.

Hence the " United States of Europe " is an idea which runs directly counter both economically and politically to the course of development, and which takes absolutely no account of the events of the last quarter of a century.

That an idea so little in accord with the tendency of development can fundamentally offer no progressive solution in spite of all radical disguises is confirmed also by the fate of the slogan of the " United States of Europe." Every time that bourgeois politicians have championed the idea of Europeanism, of the union of European States, it has been with an open or concealed point directed against the " yellow peril," the ' dark continent," against the " inferior races," in short, it has always been an imperialist abortion.

And now if we, as Social Democrats, were to try to fill this old skin with fresh and apparently revolutionary wine, then it must be said that the advantages would not be on our side but on that of the bourgeoisie. Things have their own objective logic. And the solution of the European union within the capitalist social order can objectively, in the economic sense, mean only a tariff war with America, and in the political sense only a colonial race war. The Chinese campaign of the united European regiments, with the World Field Marshal Waldersee at the head, and the gospel of the Hun as our standard—that is the actual and not the fantastic, the only possible expression of the " European State Federation " in the present social order.

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ARE WE NEARING REVOLUTION?

By EMILE BURNS

IMMEDIATELY after the war, with the firmer establishment of the Soviet Government in Russia, the revolutionary tendencies—and incidents—in Central Europe, and the widespread activity of the workers in every country, including Britain, it seemed as if revolution would sweep from one country to another in a continuous tide. In 1921 the industrial collapse was followed by the collapse of the workers' organisations, the weakening of the fighting spirit of the workers, and the gradual withdrawal by the capitalists of the concessions forced from them during the preceding years. Soon it began to be realised that capitalism had managed in some sense to "stabilise" itself, that in many countries reactionary movements were installed, and that the revolutionary tendencies had been overcome, or at least temporarily submerged. The prospect of revolution, here or in Europe, faded into the distance, and the working class seemed to be at the mercy of a capitalist class which had changed its policy from compromise to Fascism, its method from financial riot to "stabilisation."

But this period was to last no longer than the preceding period of wide revolutionary movements. Financial stabilisation was unable to change the course of industrial decline; in fact—as we shall find in the case of other capitalist "remedies"—it created serious new difficulties, culminating in an economic crisis throughout Europe on a scale that had not been reached even in 1921. The closing months of 1925 and the early months of 1926 have seen industrial collapse in Germany, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Czecho-Slovakia—all countries with a "stabilised" currency; a financial crisis in the three European countries with "unstabilised" currencies—Belgium, France and Italy—and in England the general strike, with the continued paralysis of industry through the prolonged coal stoppage.

If it was wrong to take economic difficulties and revolutionary tendencies of 1917 to 1921 as evidence of an early collapse of

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capitalism, it is no less wrong to take the very doubtful economic recovery of 1922 to 1924 as evidence of any permanent recovery of capitalism. The further developments of 1925 and 1926 have shown clearly enough that no such conclusion is justified.

There were many Labour writers who thought of the economic position after the war as being due to the war, and who looked forward to "normal" conditions when the immediate difficulties had been removed by time, peace, and goodwill. But those who had a more coherent idea of economics did not regard the war as an accidental intrusion on the development of capitalist prosperity. They saw the war itself as *a part in a process* necessarily reacting on capitalism by creating new and more intense obstacles in its way. But just as the after-war situation cannot be considered by itself, so the situation in 1925-26 cannot be considered by itself. Still less can one element in the present situation be considered by itself. Yet that is what many "sane" Labour apologists are constantly doing; in the *Socialist Review*, for example, Newbold seizes on

> the displacement of the machine and the steam engine by the physical chemical analysis and synthesis of matter and the widest application of electric energy

and argues from this (as yet absolutely unrealised) development, that capitalism has yet another shot in its locker, a shot that will re-establish capitalism and hold up revolution for a considerable time to come.

This is about as justifiable as the conclusion of some Labour leaders that because Baldwin sees the need (for capitalism) of industrial peace, and because industrial peace methods are being partially applied, therefore there will be industrial peace.

And the reason why both conclusions are wrong is the same, namely, that they ignore the already existing facts which make such a development unrealisable.

The question whether we are nearing revolution cannot therefore be dismissed by summary statements that British workers love their Constitution, or even by a curt reference to new methods of production, even if these new methods are so diabolically clever that they must be described as "the physical-chemical analysis and synthesis of matter." The answer to the question must depend on a far more careful survey of the whole position, in which the social-

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pacifist leanings of Labour leaders and the capitalist striving for new methods of production take their places, but only along with the Dawes plan and other "stabilising" measures, the acknowledged facts of declining production in capitalist countries and rising production in Soviet Russia, the rapidly increasing concentration of industrial capital under the control of finance capital, and above all, the effects on the workers and the reaction of the workers to all of these factors. Such a survey within the limits of a magazine article cannot be exhaustive, but it is nevertheless possible to put acknowledged facts into their place in the whole process, the main outlines of which are already familiar to readers of THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

In an article in *Forward* (March 27, 1926), Newbold quotes Liebknecht's account of Marx, who, having seen a working model of an electric engine drawing a railroad train, in a moment of enthusiasm declared that the developments arising out of this invention would speedily bring about the social revolution. This was in 1850; Liebknecht, writing in 1896, notes that as yet no train was driven by an electric engine. Therefore, says Liebknecht, Marx was mistaken in the *tempo* of development; therefore, says Newbold, we who expect an early revolution will be equally mistaken, because the electric age must be established before capitalism dies.

But, with his quick grasp of the obvious, Newbold has failed to see the inner meaning of these facts *from a Marxian standpoint.* In 1850 a great new productive force was known to exist; in 1896 it had not yet been effectively applied; in 1926 the capitalist class in Britain was still unable to harness this force, rejected any attempt at a real "coal and power scheme," preferring to face a first-class industrial crisis, and finally produced a tin-pot Electricity Bill as the most that capitalism could do.

Now what is the meaning of this? Is the Socialist movement not right in pointing out that the hindrance to this development is capitalism itself? Is it not right to contrast this delay in applying electricity on an effective scale here with the tremendous advance towards electrification made in backward Russia during a few years of revolutionary rule? Is it not right to point to the present position in the coal industry as a perfect example of the constant

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hampering by capitalism of any reorganisation and new methods ? Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* contains the following :—

> "At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or, what is but a legal expression for the same thing, with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution."

Whether any particular forces of production can develop within a form of society depends on the extent to which the existing relations of production, property relations, hamper that development ; if they hamper it seriously, the new forces burst down the barriers by means of social revolution—a change in property relations so that the latter become favourable to the development which is essential to the future existence of society.

The bursting of the barriers does not however take place accidentally, without warning ; there are signs in the sky and other dreadful portents, such as General Strikes, widespread unemployment, Fascism. In other words, the social revolution requires the existence of an intensified class struggle, which itself arises out of the failure of production under the existing conditions. For this reason, the facts of declining production and the enormous growth of unemployment are of first-rate significance. The general strike or the coal lock-out did not happen by accident, any more that the Great War did. They arose out of the declining production of capitalist Britain.[1] The general strike and the coal lock-out in turn accelerate the process of decline. The accelerated process of decline, in turn, begets new industrial struggles.

Nor is it merely the situation in Britain which must be taken into account. The Empire is full of menacing dangers ; Europe, especially Germany, with industrial problems similar to those of Britain, is little better than a plague-spot for capitalism. The British colonial areas, it is true, may be of some use to capitalism,

[1] For a summary of the facts, see the pamphlet, *The Industrial Crisis*, issued by the Labour Research Department, 1*d*.

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and may assist British industry in so far as they are able to place increasing orders for industrial products. But these, too, are insignificant, as anyone who knows the statistics must realise. The increase of orders for cottons from the African colonies is less than one per cent. of the loss of orders from the East. (Britain's total exports of cotton piece goods in 1925 were only 70 per cent. of the 1913 figure.) Even a £10 million loan to East Africa, to enable British products to be sent there, is insignificant, compared with the loss of machinery exports to other countries (Britain's total machinery exports were 689,000 tons in 1913 ; 516,000 tons in 1925). Phillips Price, in *Forward* (April 10, 1926), suggests that salvation for British capitalism may be found in Africa :—

> What if orders began to pour into our great engineering works for railways, harbours, mining equipment for Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Tanganyika, and Kenya ?

Well, no doubt they will come in : they have already been dribbling in under the guiding hands of a capitalist government : but *not fast enough* to counterbalance the decline in orders from other markets, as is proved by the continuous decline in our trade statistics.

Nor can the nature of present-day monopoly capitalism be left out of account. The development of Africa under the guidance of finance capital is not a purely healthy process for capitalism. The stage of developing new real wealth, new sources of production, is passing away. It is becoming more a question of creating new means of production, at points where labour is cheap, to take the place of the old—cotton mills in India to do Lancashire's work ; or of creating new claims on the workers in interest, through the State machinery—subsidies, and loans for works that are never used productively. Colonial development under such conditions is continually aggravating the position in the mother country, continually creating new causes of industrial struggles ; while at the same time the colonies themselves become the arena of new struggles.

Finally, there is the menace of war, threatening further economic catastrophe. Capitalism which is conscious of increasing industrial difficulties at home becomes more aggressively interested in expansion ; and the United States is now just reaching

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the acute Imperialist stage in her development under capitalism. France and Italy are also seeking new worlds to conquer, to provide the needs of their expanding industry.

The position, when all factors are considered, is not one that can offer capitalism any form of stability, or ordered progress. On the contrary, all the evidence goes to show the increasing difficulties for capitalist growth, throwing up crises at shorter and shorter intervals, while each crisis is more fundamental, more disturbing to the capitalist fabric as a whole. Moreover, the workers are becoming more conscious of the nature of the struggle, more determined in every phase of the continuous fight against the degradation which a decaying capitalism is trying to impose.

To sum up, therefore, the material conditions for a revolutionary change appear to exist ; and the psychological conditions, with the necessary preparation of the workers under the guidance of a revolutionary Party, are undoubtedly developing. Similar, in some cases more developed, conditions exist in other European countries ; war, or an unusually acute economic crisis (such as exists in Poland to-day) may cause far-reaching developments at any moment.

In such circumstances, the question whether we in Britain are nearing revolution loses its air of unreality. No serious student would attempt to say how near any country is to revolution in terms of months or years ; but the study of economic facts would be useless if it did not give sufficient grounds for a practical conclusion. And the facts of to-day show clearly enough that capitalist production has reached a stage in which decline, and the social effects of its decline, are becoming dominant, and the aspects of stability and recovery subordinate ; that the process towards collapse is consequently accelerating ; and that therefore the preparation of the workers to take over power is an urgent task, which, if resolutely undertaken, may appreciably shorten the period of conflict and suffering that must otherwise be bitter and prolonged.

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THE FUNCTIONS OF A COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY

By M. N. LIADOV

THERE has been much discussion in Russia on the tasks and functions of the Communist Universities. The exact character of the instruction that should be given is still a vexed question, and the physiognomy, so to speak, of the Communist University as a whole is not yet clear and definite. The history of these universities is well-known. They arose primarily out of the short courses which were established to provide the party with a definite type of propagandist-agitator. Later, with the establishment of a basic three-years' course, considerable confusion has arisen. Some maintained that the task of the Communist University was to give a theoretical basis for the practical equipment already possessed by the student, others believed that a Communist University should elaborate a complete Marxist world philosophy, while still others were of the opinion that their task was to create educated Marxists.

Actually, our task cannot be comprehended under any of these heads. The provision of a Marxist basis means nothing. We all know that even our class enemies have such a basis. The Second International employs Marxist methods. Consequently this formula does not guarantee that we shall turn out a really useful type of worker, one of which the party stands in need. In the second place, to say that our task is simply to create an educated, literate intelligent worker is again no definition. It is much too diffuse. There is in no society such a thing as education which has not a class character. Education was always a weapon in the hands of the ruling class. Everywhere and at all times knowledge has been the appanage of a relatively small group of persons, who have made use of this weapon to re-inforce their mastery. The intelligentsia belonged, of course, to the ruling class, and through it the latter exerted their influence on the masses. Consequently the

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system of instruction of education and of science was always adapted to the needs of government. We have never considered science to be non-political. We have always connected it, and should connect it with the tasks which the working class sets before itself.

There was a deep distinction between Russian pre-revolutionary education and West-European education. In the leading countries of the west the bourgeoisie appears as a clearly marked-off class with a sufficiently numerous intelligentsia of its own, and consequently higher education in France, England and other European countries represents a purely class privilege. There the composition of university students is exclusively bourgeois. The petty bourgeoisie even is not in a position to send its children to the higher educational institutions. Widespread popular education is meant to produce suitable servile material, but higher education is adapted for moulding men who will occupy commanding posts in economic and governmental activity. These persons come exclusively from the ranks of the ruling class and everything is directed towards putting them in a special position and strengthening their connection with the class from which they come.

In pre-revolutionary Russia the bourgeoisie was weak. It was not in a position to occupy by itself all the commanding posts and was compelled to recruit future commanders from outside. Consequently the Russian students in pre-war days were much more democratic in their composition, and consequently also the educational system was directed towards separating them as rapidly and completely as possible from the *milieu* from which they came. The prevailing type of these students came from the ranks of the petty officials, the peasantry, &c., and the task of the university and higher education was to estrange them from their former surroundings and to convert them into instruments of the power of the ruling class.

How was this carried out ? In the first place, the student was at once dressed in a special uniform thus marking him off in external appearance from his contemporaries. Then he was instructed, not in subjects which would help him to understand the life around him, but on the contrary in those which would make him incomprehensible to his former circle. They bemused his mind with learning Latin and the history of ancient Rome, and so on. As a result,

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while the German technical schools were turning out fully fledged specialists, Russian students coming from a university or technical institution had no specialised knowledge at all. Russian engineers on leaving the technical schools had to go to factories and workshops and only there could they learn their speciality. The author himself had to go to Baku, and there he found among the engineers, railway engineers, electro-technical engineers, but with hardly an exception no mining engineers. All of them, even the last, on coming to the industry were making their first acquaintance with oil. For the university did not consider it as its task to acquaint the student with real conditions of work. Its task was to give instruction which would produce from the democratic strata of the people the necessary material for occupying commanding positions in bourgeois society.

After the revolution these methods of education were taken over as a whole from the old bourgeois world. There were the same instructors, the same science, and the same object. The ranks of the students were renewed, the proletarian youth poured into the university institutions, but the methods of instruction remained the same, there was the same break with real life, the same tendency to abstraction. The result was the same that was consciously aimed at by bourgeois science—the creation of elements foreign to their normal surroundings, and not even understanding them. Thanks to the retention of the old methods there was no guarantee that even those of proletarian origin would emerge with their own class point of view. The student youth was converted into the old type of intelligentsia, without any connection with the masses, torn from the surroundings from which it was derived.

This must be the starting point in considering the functions and tasks of a communist university. Even Marxism taught by these old methods will produce the same result. It will be Marxism divorced from concrete reality, giving a purely philosophical abstract approach to other science. Hence it is sufficient to say that the task of the Communist university is to create a Marxist view of the world.

The next important question is that of the class composition of the students. A strenuous attempt has been made to obtain a uniform body of students, and this has now been practically

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achieved ; by 1924, over 80 per cent. of the students of the Sverdlov University came from the working class. But even the small remainder cannot be neglected, for they play a big role in the actual course of instruction. They already come partly prepared for separation from the masses, they are already incapable of thinking concretely, but approach each question from their purely separated point of view. In the schools they sit side by side with students who have worked out their world view point from experience of the class struggle, but very often the teachers themselves have had the old separated type of education, and find it easier to understand the psychology of those students who think in the same way as they do.

The result is that the working-class students who cannot think in this abstract fashion are cut off, and are compelled either to follow at all costs in the train of these leading comrades or to go away. And, as a matter of fact, during the first three years' course more than half of the students dropped out. Those that thus dropped our were not the worst elements—they were only worse from the point of view of the intelligentsia, but better from the class point of view.

To come now to the object itself of the university. At different times it has fulfilled various tasks. In the beginning it served for training agitators, propagandists. That was in the period of war communism. At the end of the civil war another task was clearly set out. The ranks of the old party fighters were thinned, a new generation was growing up outside the influence of the immediate class struggle, without the living experience which can only be derived from actual participation in the class struggle. Moreover, those comrades who came to the fore in the civil war were acutely conscious that, while their class instinct was rarely mistaken during the period of rapid growth of the revolution, when it became necessary to decide party questions under terribly complicated conditions such as exist under the new economic policy, then class instinct alone was not enough. It was essential for them to get a definite Marxist-revolutionary training and to learn how to understand dialectically all the phenomena of life. The Russian Communist Party were alive to this demand on the part of the members and began to reorganise the Communist Universities, converting them into long period courses. But a clear formulation of the task was

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still not possible. If it was to create specialists in various branches, much greater time would be required. On the other hand, the workers faculties and special courses were producing trained men, the red "spetsi" (specialists), but for the time being they were not producing party leaders of whom there was an urgent need. The old guard, steeled in the class struggle, always found the right approach for decision of all the questions arising, but the young party members at the head of economic or professional bodies often put economic interests above those of the party.

The Communist University has to make up this deficiency in party education, taking a lesson from the experience of the bourgeoisie. The latter have not only institutions for the training of leaders in bourgeois economy in general, but also their own specially privileged purely class schools, where no proletarian can enter. The Communist University by its method of approach to science attempts to strengthen the connection between the students and the working class from which they spring. It must produce a party leader, armed with revolutionary Marxism, able to apply this method to the complicated circumstances of our life at every step. There are already a number of other educational institutions which are able to produce specialists in different spheres but only the Communist University with a uniform class composition can replenish our leading ranks, bodies with men and women permeated by the spirit of revolutionary Marxism.

The task of providing specialists is no longer a prime question for the Communist Universities. It was found, for instance, that the Sverdlov University was turning out students who were thoroughly conversant with biology and other sciences, but who did not even know the elements of the history of the Communist Party.

This has all been changed. The three years' course is now on the following basis. In the first year the working class student obtains a complete command of the Russian language so that he can express his thoughts in speech and writing. Mathematics and natural science have an auxiliary rôle. The student learns to analyse and synthesise phenomena. We do not want to produce scientific specialists but scientific knowledge is necessary to understand the dialectics of life. The student must understand his position in the world of nature, he must obtain a clear picture of the develop-

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ment of the whole world. In the course of this he receives his first lesson in dialectics, understanding life from the struggle which exists throughout the world.

In this first year's course the bases are laid for all the chief subjects studied later on. The chief subjects are three in number, historical methods, economics and the party. The student studies : (1) the history of the development of social forms, learning to understand the meaning of life, the meaning of class struggle, the connection between existence and knowledge, (2) economic geography for the understanding of the concrete circumstances of life in which he lives, (3) the history of the Communist Party.

During the second year's course attention is concentrated on (1) the history of the class struggle in Russia and the West, as a continuation of the course on the history of the development of social forms, during which the student masters the methods of historical analysis. (2) Political economy, studied alongside the above chiefly on the basis of the concrete material obtained during the study of economic geography, and (3) Communist Party structure and tactics and strategy of the party.

The second year's course trains the student in theoretical thinking. In the third year the student comes to the study of a number of generalisations. He studies historical materialism, in close connection with the structure of the State, with the revolution, and he approaches the solution of a number of contemporary problems, problems of the Communist Party, of contemporary economics, of politics, &c.

All these studies are closely interconnected and supplement one another. Completing them the student becomes a conscious party worker, able to apply the method of revolutionary Marxism to the solution of all questions. During the years of training the student of course takes a systematic part in the practical life of the party, and maintains a close contact with the masses. Thus are created the reinforcements which will take a worthy place in the ranks of the old guard.

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The World of Labour

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INTERNATIONAL UNITY IN ACTION

ONE feature of the general strike that has not been sufficiently emphasised is the unexampled display of international solidarity to which it gave rise. Recognition of the solidarity of the workers here has not been wanting: it does not seem to be fully realised that their marvellous, almost automatic solidarity, was exactly paralleled by the solidarity of the workers in every country with the British general strike.

From the first day of the strike onwards telegrams from the four corners of the earth poured in, in an ever-increasing stream, to the General Council; telegrams of fullest solidarity, telegrams transmitting money and promising more, telegrams announcing the active steps that were being taken to stop international black-legging. In a day and a night, it seemed, the supreme battle-cry of the working-class, "Workers of the world, unite!", had been translated into actual living fact. And it is worth noting that, since the struggle in Britain was conducted by the Trade Unions, so the international unity which sprang up to support it was essentially Trade Union unity. For near two years now, the campaign for international Trade Union unity has pursued its varied course—on the whole a campaign of leaders, and not of the masses. Suddenly the British general strike brought the issue right down among the masses, who actually realised international unity in action to an extent that till May 3-12, would hardly have been thought possible.

Here a caveat should be inserted. If the policy of Scarborough, and of the Russian Unions, had been followed out, and we had achieved a united Trade Union International—with the corollary of complete national unity in the various countries—it would have been possible to make the great wave of solidarity even more effective than it was. The lesson is one that should not be lost.

The power of international solidarity to bridge the gulf between rival local or national unions is well illustrated in the case of Holland—the classic country of Trade Union splits. There unions which had been at each other's throats for a generation unhesitatingly joined hands and stood together in support of their British comrades.

Not least in the indictment against the General Council is their failure to realise the enormous reserve of strength for the British workers represented by this vast display of international solidarity. As a continental Trade Unionist,

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P. J. Schmidt, of Amsterdam, has said—"The continental workers were eager and anxious to help. All over Europe collecting sheets were being got out . . . An appeal from the General Council to the workers of Europe would have resulted in money and food being poured into England." (*Sunday Worker*, June 6, 1926.) Below we give a summary record, from the available published information, of the aid and sympathy shown by workers and Labour organisations abroad. It must be understood that the cases recorded here are, in the nature of things, but the merest fraction of the whole.

International

In modern industrial society transport is the key-position of any strike: and therefore any action of international solidarity depends principally on the attitude of the transport workers. The transport workers of Europe responded magnificently to the call of the British general strike. Their efforts were co-ordinated and directed by the International Transportworkers' Federation, under the indefatigable leadership of its Secretary, Edo Fimmen. Immediately the general strike took place the I.T.F. telegraphed the Transport Unions of France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany, to stop the export of coal to Britain and the bunkering of British ships, also to prevent seamen signing on in British ships. The Transport Unions of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, also immediately offered their help. In fact, the Danes and the Dutchmen had begun the embargo without waiting for instructions. Within a few days, the I.T.F. was the general staff of what had become a complete European boycott of all transport to Britain. On May 9 a conference of the I.T.F. was held in Ostend, attended by British representatives and also by representatives of the Miners' International, at which the whole position was reviewed and measures taken for consolidating and extending the boycott.

The first days of the strike also saw appeals from the *Red International of Labour Unions* to all its affiliated bodies, instructing the imposition of the boycott, suggesting that all workers should levy themselves a quarter of a day's pay, and urging the necessity of forming committees of action, representing all tendencies, to organise assistance for the British strikers. These points were also taken up in a manifesto of the Executive Committee of the *Communist International*, which especially stressed the importance of Communists in all countries inviting the Social Democrats to form united committees of action.

The *International Federation of Trade Unions* sent £1,000 and took no further action till May 10, when it held a joint meeting in Amsterdam, with the Executive of the *Labour and Socialist International*. This meeting decided to leave matters in the hands of the I.F.T.U. since the struggle was "purely industrial": and on the following day, Messrs Brown and Oudegeest, two of the Secretaries, were sent to London to "discuss the situation." An appeal from the E.C.C.I. and the R.I.L.U. to the joint meeting, proposing the organisation of a joint campaign, received no response.

The Central Committee of the *Workers' International Relief* (Berlin), appealed to all its sections to organise collections and raise funds for the British workers.

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Europe

When we begin to particularise, first place must be given to the unparalleled solidarity shown by the workers of *Soviet Russia*. The position was summed up by the chairman of the Leningrad Trades Council, who said: "The British workers in 1920 prevented the intervention of the British bourgeoisie against Soviet Russia. We will pay back our debt a hundredfold." That was the spirit throughout the Soviet Union. The decision of the Central Council of Trade Unions, for a general levy of a quarter of a day's pay was enthusiastically taken up. Even before this decision was arrived at, collections were everywhere being spontaneously undertaken.

In every town of the Soviet Union, down to the most remote corners of its far-flung territory, the workers came out on to the streets to demonstrate their solidarity; all reports speak of the intense excitement and enthusiasm that prevailed. Kharkov was a typical case. There the workers poured out of the factories at the end of the day, 150,000 of them, the crowd being so dense that the trams had to be stopped: the demonstrators carried banners with the significant legend "Our British brothers expect not only greetings, but actual help." That actual help took the shape of a first instalment of £350,000, whose subsequent history so far as this side is concerned is well known. In the Russian coalfields the miners resolved to contribute as much as two days' wages. In Leningrad, metalworkers decided to work two hours' overtime for several days and to send their overtime pay to the British strikers. Theatres held special performances on behalf of the British strikers. Newspapers opened special funds. The central and local Trade Union organisations voted money from their funds, over and above the levy on wages. The Co-operatives sent £3,000.

The seamen, dockers, and transport workers of the Soviet Union fell into line with the I.T.F., and operated a complete boycott, holding up all British ships in Russian ports. They were in fact instructed by their Trade Unions to declare a partial strike. All Soviet ships on the way to Britain were informed of this by wireless, and instructed to join the general strike immediately on entering the nearest British port, to prevent the unloading of their cargoes and only to allow loading or unloading with the consent of the General Council.

A meeting of scientists and professors in Leningrad issued an appeal to the intellectuals of Britain expressing the conviction that in this struggle of world-historical importance the British intellectuals would stand on the side of the working-class.

Typical of the spirit shown by the workers of *Germany* was the remarkable unity of the various Miners' Unions—"Free" (Social-Democratic), Christian, "Red," &c.,—who jointly appealed to the Ruhr miners to operate the Brussels decisions of the Miners' International, *i.e.*, to see that not a ton of coal left the Ruhr for England, by refusing to work overtime and by striking if such coal exports continued. Tremendous mass meetings were held all over Germany, and big collections were taken up, largely through the instrumentality of the Workers' International Relief; a street collection in Berlin alone realised over £2,000.

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The Miners' Union in *Belgium* took action similar to the German miners, and promised financial assistance: workers in Brussels made an initial collection of 2,000 francs.

In *Czecho-Slovakia* the solidarity organisation was particularly thorough. The Miners' Unions unitedly informed the Ministry of Public Works and the Mineowners' Federation that they proposed to carry out the Brussels decisions: then in joint session with the Railwaymen's Union, they worked out the practical steps to be taken. These consisted of the organisation at frontier stations of special Trade Union Control Commissions, fully empowered to take the necessary measures to stop any increase in coal export. The large and influential Czecho-Slovak Communist Party, together with the "One Big Union" (the International All-Trade Union Federation affiliated to the R.I.L.U.), was noticeably the first in the field campaigning for united solidarity with the British strikers. It appealed to the orthodox (Amsterdam) German and Czech Trade Unions and to the Socialist Parties: these bodies uneasily held back, and it was not till May 10 that a first contribution was sent from the Trade Unions to Britain.

The split in the Trade Union movement in *France* did not prevent the organising of solidarity, though it unfortunately militated against that solidarity being as effective in all respects as it might otherwise have been. Both the C.G.T.U. and the C.G.T. arranged for financial aid, the former opening a national subscription. Up to May 11 the French section of the Workers' International Relief had collected 112,500 francs and Parisian printers, who had just gained a wage increase, decided to hand over the amount of the increase to the British strikers. Both Trade Union centres enforced the embargo through their miners', railwaymen's, dockers', and seamen's organisations. The C.G.T.U. telegraphed to the General Council placing its whole organisation at their disposal, announcing the enforcement of the embargo, and asking for instructions. It was announced that a Vigilance Committee had been set up to see that the embargo was rigidly enforced: unhappily—owing principally to the Union split, as mentioned above—there was a complete failure to stop the printing of the continental *Daily Mail* in Paris. The withdrawal of Union labour, and the refusal of the printers on the *Matin, Comoedia*, and other Paris newspapers to print extra editions of the continental *Daily Mail* certainly crippled that organ a great deal more than its exaggerated figures showed—but still it appeared.

Trade unionists in *Switzerland* were called upon by their organisations to levy themselves not less than one franc a head.

The *Dutch* Federation of Trade Unions sent a first contribution of £5,000 and arranged for collections all over the country, with collecting sheets and 25 cent. "stamps of solidarity."

All the Scandinavian trade unions, as noted above, loyally carried out the transport embargo. In addition, the Trades Union Congress of *Denmark* contributed £2,200, which it proposed to make a weekly payment "for the duration." The *Norwegian* workers had their hands full with a general lock-out, but the lock-out committee of the Builders' Union found time to send its assurances of solidarity and hopes for victory.

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Among the trade unions in the Baltic States, those of *Poland* and *Latvia* come forward with support, the Polish unions forbidding coal export or the bunkering of British ships at Danzig.

The *Greek* Trade Union Federation adopted a resolution expressing its solidarity and promising financial assistance.

The *Austrian* Metal Workers' Union, one of the largest Trade Unions in Austria, resolved to offer full assistance and to organise mass meetings in order to explain to the Austrian workers the need for material solidarity with their British comrades.

Assistance was proffered by the *Irish* T.U.C., and also by the Labour organisations in *Northern Ireland.*

Africa

The *South African* T.U.C. decided on full support for the British strike, and called upon South African printers to refuse to print any misrepresentations of the British strikers and their cause.

America

So far as the *United States* were concerned, an attempt was made by William Green, the successor of Gompers as President of the A.F. of L., to sabotage solidarity. On the first day of the strike he found it necessary to make a statement condemning the general strike in principle. This earned him much Press and governmental praise, but it immediately became evident that he was not carrying American trade union opinion with him. Many A.F. of L. locals repudiated his attitude, for instance the Central Labour Council of New York City, and the Chicago local of the Machinists. Farrington, the President of the Illinois Miners, cabled promising moral and material support to the M.F.G.B. The United Mine Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies' Garment Workers came forward likewise. The Workers (Communist) Party appealed to transport workers to enforce the embargo, and invited the Socialist Party to a united front demonstration.

Green came down with a run and, though not referring to the general strike, stated that " American Labour desires to help the British miners " : at the same time he cabled to the I.F.T.U., " Will give all support possible to the British miners in their fight for decent wages." It was stated that the A.F. of L. would take steps to prevent any recruiting of blacklegs in the United States.

The *Canadian* Trades and Labour Congress cabled to the General Council, " the full moral support of the Canadian workers in your present struggle to maintain the already meagre standards of living of the British workers " and made all arrangements for financial assistance. Similar assurances came from the Farmers' Union, the London (Ontario) Trades and Labour Council, the Toronto Central Council and an Edmonton (Alberta) convention of the Canadian Labour Party.

In *Mexico* the C.R.O.M.—the Trade Union Federation—forbade the loading of all fuel, coal or oil (including bunkering) for Britain. It sent a

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preliminary gift of $1,000, announcing that more was being collected. The electricians declared a one-hour sympathetic strike.

The Trade Unions of the *Argentine* and of *Cuba* recorded their solidarity: in Buenos Aires the Communist Party organised demonstrations and extensive collections were set on foot through the various Labour organisations, notably the W.I.R.

Asia and Australasia

One of the first trade union centres to send financial help was the *Palestine* T.U.C., with a gift of £100.

From *India*, the very first day of the strike, a mass meeting of labourers at Lahore sent a message of solidarity. The All-India T.U.C. conveyed the wishes of all Indian workers for success in the "great fight for the maintenance of the standard of life." It sent sums amounting to £500 and took steps to prevent the bunkering of British ships in Indian ports.

The Federation of Trade Unions of *Japan* exhorted the British workers to "fight to the last," assuring them of its earnest support and announcing the taking of steps to collect money. A similar message came from the *Korean* Labour League.

The Revolutionary Government of *Canton* was reported to have expressed its solidarity in the name of the workers and peasants of Southern China.

In *Australia* the Sydney Trades Council got into touch with the Seamen's, Miners', and Coal Porters' Unions to enforce the embargo on coal for England, and to stop the bunkering of British ships. The Miners' Union took steps to operate this, and the Railwaymen's Union also declared their support of the British strike.

The *New Zealand* Alliance of Labour (T.U.C.) sent £1,000 as a first instalment.

GERMANY

The Referendum

AFTER the revolution in Germany, the disposal of the property of the ruling houses was left for future settlement, and early this year the members of those families, twenty-two princes in all, put in their claims amounting all together to between 2.5 and 3 milliard gold marks. The items of these demands include agricultural property, mansions, industrial rights, &c., and sums amounting to over five million gold marks for the mistresses of the late Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, as "hush money" and pensions. (*Manchester Guardian*, January 11, 1926.)

The first organised protest was raised by the Communist Party, and it was not until the rank and file of the Social-Democratic Party demanded definite action that the leaders raised similar protests. Through the mediation of the Trade Union Federation, the invitation of the Communist Party for a joint campaign of both parties was agreed to, and a bill was drawn up to be the subject of a preliminary Referendum on the basis of expropriation without compensation of all the property of the former ruling houses.

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According to the German constitution, the Referendum must be demanded by 10 per cent. of the electorate before it can take place, that is 4,000,000 votes were required if the Expropriation Bill is to go before the entire electorate. Voting began on March 3, and lasted a fortnight. From the very beginning of the campaign the Social Democratic leaders sabotaged the work and engaged in caluminating the Communist Party. The Berlin correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote (March 19, 1926):—

> The issue was raised by the Communist Party much against the will, not only of the Conservative parties, but also of the Centre and Democrats, and even the Socialists . . . The Socialist party discouraged the idea of expropriation until the mass of German Labour began to rebel.

The Times correspondent, in the issue of February 5, remarked that :—

> The Socialists, having made their popular gesture by supporting the Referendum, would to all appearances not be sorry to find a way of evading it.

In spite of these difficulties, the threats and obstruction of the Conservative parties, and the great danger of victimisation under which rural voters had to sign, 12½ million votes were obtained for the Referendum, which represents about two million votes more than the combined Socialist and Communist vote at the last general election.

Accordingly the Expropriation Bill was put before the Reichstag, and was defeated. The next step was the Referendum itself, and for its success a favourable vote of half the total electorate was required, *i.e.*, nearly 20,000,000. The voting took place on Sunday, June 20, and as the day approached, excitement grew considerably, as it was widely expected that the required number would be attained. Preparations, of a more than usually serious type, for a monarchist-fascist *coup d'etat*, organised apparently in direct response to the threat of expropriation, were discovered by the Prussian police.

Hindenburg, the President of the Republic, issued a letter in which expropriation was violently condemned. Herr Stresemann, the Foreign Minister, declared that even if the Referendum were successful " he could not conceive of any Government willing to carry through the expropriation of the ex-dynasties " (*Daily Herald*, June 1, 1926.) The official attitude adopted by both the Luther and Marx Governments was strong opposition to the bill, but the latter declared that if the Referendum were unsuccessful, the Government would press for a compromise, and would " face the consequences " if it were not attained. The Roman Catholic Church officially denounced the bill, and the Evangelical Church Committee declared that it was " contrary to the teachings of the gospel." The " right-wing " political parties naturally took up the question with the greatest energy, and were reported (*Observer*, June 20, 1926), to have spent over 20,000,000 marks on propaganda. Their policy was to advise their supporters to abstain from voting, as abstention on their part would facilitate victimisation of those who did vote, and would not affect the result. The Centre Party did not adopt this policy, but advised its followers to vote against, while the Democratic Party alone gave no official directions.

The Socialist and Communist Parties, with the Trade Union Federation, ran the campaign together, and in many localities " united front " committees

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worked successfully, though in others differences could not be overcome. The enthusiasm shown by the working-class was great, and was reported to extend to many of the petty-bourgeoisie, and to the members of the Catholic and Liberal Trade Unions, and the "Centre" parties. *The Times* correspondent wrote (June 19, 1926) that although the Social Democratic Party leaders were initially doubtful

> circumstances have since swept them into a whole-hearted struggle for the Referendum, with which in some measure their prestige is bound up.

On the other hand the *Observer* correspondent (June 20, 1926) asserted that what the Socialist leaders desired was a large, but insufficient, favourable vote, which would enable them to "exert pressure" in favour of a compromise.

The result, declared on the day after the poll, was provisionally given as 14,500,000. It was admitted (*e.g.*, *Manchester Guardian*, June 22, 1926), that but for the fear of victimisation, and, in rural districts, actual terrorism, the vote would have been very much greater.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

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